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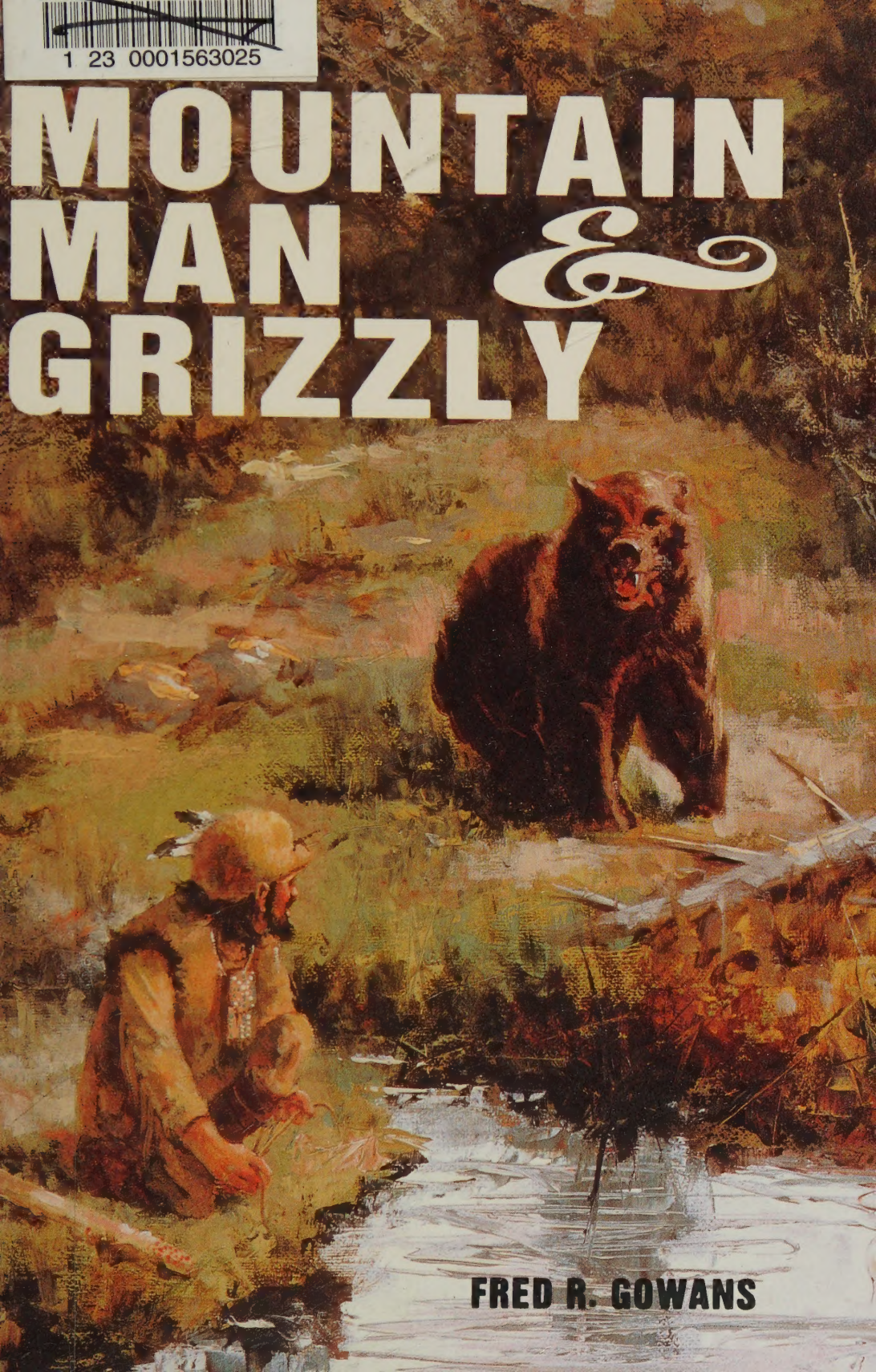

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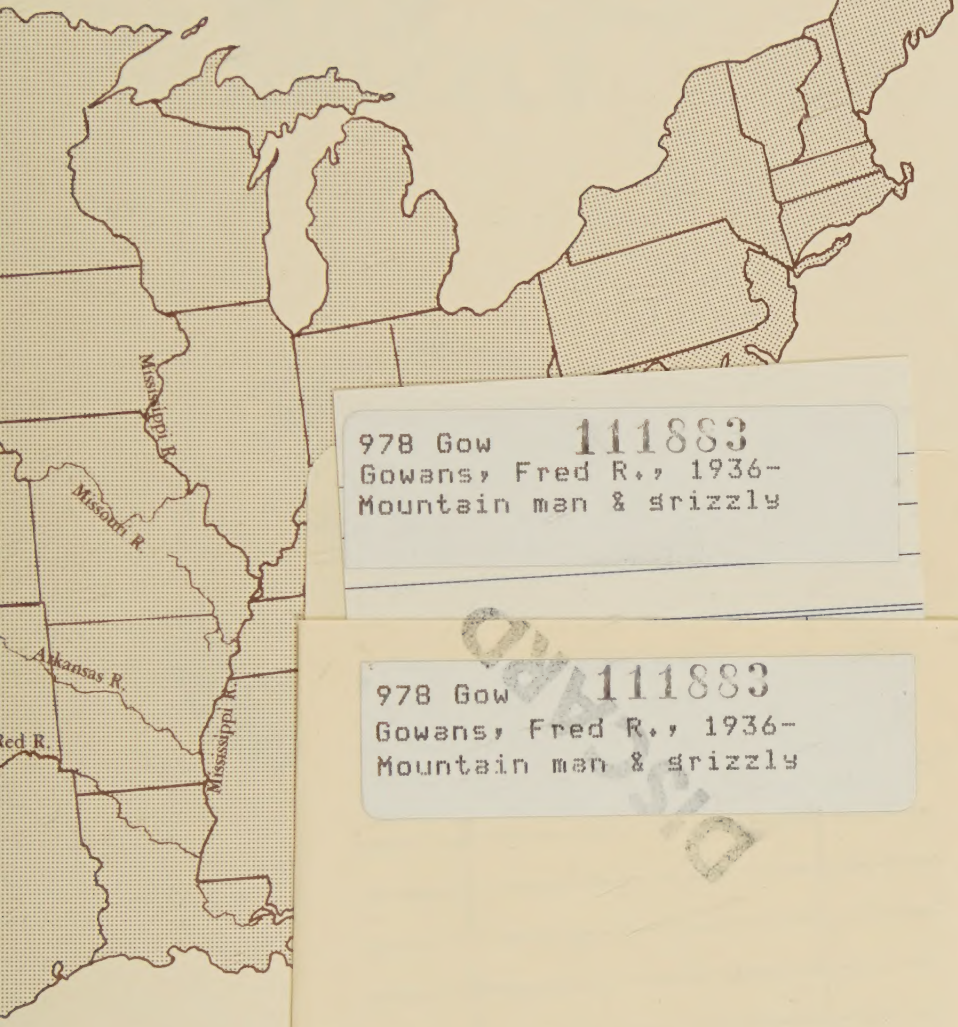

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To

EUGENE E. CAMPBELL

Scholar and Friend

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INTRODUCTION

Next to the harsh environment, the primary opponents of the mountain men were the constant threat of the plundering Blackfoot Indians and the indestructible grizzly. While a substantial amount of literature has been published regarding the history of the American fur trade and, even more specifically, the era of the mountain men (1824–40), with its picturesque annual rendezvous; and while there are numerous publications examining the biological, ecological, and behavioral characteristics of the grizzly bear, the literature largely neglects the confrontations that took place in the trans-Mississippi West during the first half of the nineteenth century between the mountain men and the grizzly. It is my hope that my years of research will help complete this story.

The text is divided into four divisions, namely, The Observations, The Expeditions, The Mountain Men, and In California.

THE OBSERVATIONS

The era of the Rocky Mountain fur trade brought a surprising diversity of people to the American frontier: European nobility, explorers, scientists, businessmen, artists, clergymen, government officials, and mountain men. These included such notables as Alexander Maximilian, Meriwether Lewis, John Townsend, John Wyeth, Alfred Jacob Miller, Kit Carson, Father Pierre Jean de Smet, and William Clark. Many of these individuals not only had personal encounters with the grizzly but also heard the many stories that were often told by the western traveler. They saw the respect that the Indian had for this fearless animal and saw the prestige obtained through the grizzly claw necklace—a necklace worn by only a select few. Their own numerous impressions and observations record the physical traits and behavioral patterns of this legendary animal as it was first encountered on the great plains and in the mountains of the American West.

THE EXPEDITIONS

It was not uncommon at the turn of the nineteenth century in frontier communities to hear individuals who had pushed up the Missouri

River from St. Louis to trade with the Indians tell hair-raising tales about grizzlies. However, prior to the era of the mountain men, few American expeditions had penetrated into the vast wilderness that lay beyond the Missouri. At that time very little scientific information was available about the grizzly. It was through the diaries and journals of the men who accompanied three major exploring parties—namely, the Lewis and Clark, overland Astorian, and Long expeditions—that reliable observations about the grizzly were compiled. As they traveled through grizzly country, these men carefully scrutinized (and, indeed, on several occasions were confronted by) this invincible animal. It was, however, the mountain men during the next few decades who established permanent residency in these same lands and set the stage for the major confrontation between grizzly and man.

Lewis and Clark Expedition

With the accession of Napoleon Bonaparte, emperor of France, came the renewal of the French colonial empire. Napoleon convinced King Charles IV of Spain to trade Louisiana for certain concessions in Italy, and with the signing of the secret Treaty of San Ildefonso on October 1, 1800, France acquired Louisiana. Napoleon's next step was to conquer Santo Domingo, but the failure of French troops due to disease and to the resistance of the black population, in addition to the English declaration of war on France, forced Napoleon to sell Louisiana to the United States. After negotiations, a treaty was signed in France on April 30, 1803, in which all of the Louisiana Territory was acquired for fifteen million dollars. The treaty was ratified by Napoleon on May 22, 1803. The formal ceremony of the transition of New Orleans took place on December 20, 1803, and the transfer of upper Louisiana became official on March 9, 1804, at St. Louis.

For many years Thomas Jefferson had been intrigued by the trans-Mississippi West, particularly in relation to the source of the Missouri River and the vastness of the Rocky Mountains. In 1786, because of the international interests of England and other countries in these western lands, Jefferson induced John Ledyard, an American who was living in Europe, to explore the American West by approaching the continent through Russia, Siberia, and Nootka Sound. The expedition was forced to stop, however, when Ledyard was turned back in Siberia by Empress Catherine. With Jefferson's election and the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory came a proposal to Congress for an overland expedition. Congress agreed, appropriating $2,500 for the purpose of sending a military expedition

to extend the external commerce of the United States. Jefferson selected Meriwether Lewis, his private secretary, to head the expedition, and with Jefferson's consent Lewis chose William Clark to be his co-leader. Jefferson's instructions to the leaders were to ascend the Missouri River, cross the mountains, and descend any river that would take them to the Pacific Ocean. Facts to be gathered and assignments to be completed were numerous: latitudes and longitudes of important geographical features; traffic of Canadian traders; credibility of the fur trade's being tied in to the interests of the United States; observation and records of climate, animals, plants, minerals, and soil; and, in addition, friendship with the natives was to be encouraged. Lewis traveled from Washington to Pittsburgh in July, 1803, and left that city in late August, taking passage by boat down the Ohio River. Winter camp was made on the Dubois River on the east side of the Mississippi River. This was arranged so as not to offend the Spanish officials on the west bank, since the actual transfer of Spanish land had not yet taken place in upper Louisiana. Clark spent the winter choosing and drilling men, while Lewis spent most of his time in St. Louis gathering information from fur traders about the navigation of the Missouri River and the Indians of that region. Apparently it was at this time that Lewis heard his first accounts of the grizzly bear.

On May 14, 1804, the expedition left its winter camp, passing the last settlement on May 25 and the mouth of the Platte River in late July. By October, the members of the expedition reached the Mandan villages and constructed Fort Mandan a few miles below the Indian settlements. On April 7, 1805, they left the Mandans, and their journals reveal the anxiety and anticipation they felt in meeting their first grizzly. They had heard many stories during the winter from the Indians about the mysterious monster. The Indians told them how they "hunted [the grizzly] in parties of eight to ten men," and that "the warriors wore war paint as they would when going to war against their enemies." The natives said that the guns which they had obtained from the British fur traders were not reliable and often were "the cause of death for many of the people while hunting the grizzly." The Indians told Lewis and Clark that the grizzly "was more apt to attack than to run" and that it was sometimes as "white as the snow." On April 26, the party passed the mouth of the Yellowstone River and by late July, when they arrived at the Three Forks of the Missouri River, they had gained great respect for the grizzly. In their early confrontations, both Lewis and Clark felt that the grizzly "was not dangerous if the hunter was skillful." Yet, as the expedition moved up the Missouri, it was not long before their journals revealed such entries

as "the grizzly intimidates us all," "I would rather fight two Indians than one bear," and "the men are becoming very fearful of the grizzly." Lewis referred to these animals as the "Gentlemen." With regard to the safety of the men, some of the physical characteristics noted by the expedition members were that "the grizzly could stand erect as a man to survey the surrounding country and any intruders" yet "he could not climb a tree," and that "the rivers were often the last resort of safety to escape the ferocious attacks." Even this security was proven to be unreliable, as the men found the big bears to be expert swimmers. The men were in awe at the size of these bears, referring to them as being "as large as the common ox." They felt that "the only way to kill was a brain shot," causing "tremendous roaring," and that "incredible wounds could be inflicted on the bear yet could not kill him, and that in that condition would attack several hunters." It was noted that grizzlies would often "dig holes for dying in when badly shot." The expedition found a large concentration of grizzlies around the Great Falls and neighboring islands of the Missouri, which "caused the dog to be in a constant state of alarm at night" and the "men to sleep with their arms due to the grizzly prowling around their night camps." The expedition arrived at the source of the Missouri on August 12 and sighted the Pacific Ocean on November 7. After crossing the continental divide Lewis became intrigued with the physical differences between the grizzly and black bear. His diary supports his opinion that the white, grizzly, and brown bears were all the same species.

The expedition spent the winter of 1805–06 at Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia River. On March 23, 1806, the expedition started for St. Louis. While encamped a few weeks with the Nez Perce Indians, waiting for the snow to melt in the mountain passes, both Lewis and Clark recorded several impressions of the nature of the grizzly. After crossing Lolo Pass the party divided, with Clark exploring the Yellowstone River and Lewis the Marias River, during which time Lewis recorded that "a hunter seperated from his horse had a chance of one in ten to escape a grizzly attack." After reuniting near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers, they reached the Mandan villages on August 14 and then returned downriver to St. Louis, arriving on September 23, 1806.

Overland Astorian Expedition

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was the most important American operation on the upper Missouri River. However, during the same time, another

organization arose which was destined to become the most powerful fur trading company in the trans-Mississippi West.

John Jacob Astor, a German immigrant, arrived in America in 1784 and by the close of the eighteenth century became one of the most powerful fur dealers in America. In 1808, Astor secured a charter from the state of New York and established the American Fur Company. One of Astor's ambitions was to take control of the fur trade in the Pacific Northwest. In 1810, he organized the Pacific Fur Company as a subsidiary of the American Fur Company to handle the affairs of the western trade. His plan included the establishment of a post at the mouth of the Columbia River, which would be supplied by boats from New York. From this central post, Astor planned to control the trade with the Indians throughout the Oregon country. Two expeditions were sent to the Columbia—one by sea, the other overland. The *Tonquin* sailed from New York in September of 1810, arriving at the mouth of the Columbia in late March, 1811. A post, Astoria, was soon completed. The overland Astorians left St. Louis in March of 1811, under the direction of Wilson Price Hunt. Arriving at the Arikara villages in June, Hunt was informed of the hostility of the Blackfoot Indians. Hunt decided to leave the river route and push westward, across present-day South Dakota to the Black Hills, and across Wyoming to the headwaters of the Snake River. While traversing this country, the party encountered their first grizzly and had several further confrontations which caused the men to record "that the grizzly was the only formidable quadruped on the American continent." They were in constant fear of his "prodigious strength," which included "claws nine inches long." They believed that "the grizzly could receive repeated wounds without flinching and that only a shot to the head or heart could stop him." They marveled at both his size (referring to him as being "the size of a common cow") and his prowess (he "could outrun any man" and "a horse was in danger due to the grizzlies' speed.") The expedition pushed across the desert regions of the Snake River Valley of southern Idaho, crossed the Blue Mountains of Oregon, and descended the Columbia River Gorge, finally reaching Fort Astoria in February, 1812.

Stephen H. Long Expedition

In 1812, international difficulties erupted into war which delayed further western exploration. But by 1814, peace was restored and in 1817 the federal government renewed its interests in the West with the

establishment of Fort Smith on the Arkansas River by Major Stephen H. Long. During the same year, Long, a member of the Topographical Engineers, was sent to select sites for military forts on the upper Mississippi River and, in 1819, Fort Anthony was established by Colonel Henry Leavenworth at the mouth of the Minnesota River. Also in 1819, the Yellowstone expedition was sent up the Missouri River to establish a fort either at the mouth of the Yellowstone River or near the Mandan Indian villages. The construction of this fort was part of a plan devised by President James Monroe and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun to provide protection for the fur trade: it was to crush the resistance among the Indians and to discourage British trading in that region. Colonel Henry Atkinson and Major Stephen H. Long were placed in charge of the military and scientific aspects of the expedition, respectively. The expedition spent the winter of 1819–20 near Council Bluffs (Camp Missouri, later known as Fort Atkinson), during which time nearly one hundred men in the party died of scurvy. The entire Yellowstone expedition proved unsuccessful due to numerous problems, the most serious being transportation.

Congress finally terminated the expedition but, hoping to salvage something from the investment, organized two small exploration parties. The first, under Captain Magee, was to open an overland route between Council Bluffs on the Missouri River to Fort Anthony on the upper Mississippi River. The other party was sent to the Rocky Mountains under the direction of Major Long to find the source of the Red River. Long left the Bluffs on June 6, 1820, traveled up the Platte River to its fork, and then turned to the southwest, ascended South Fork and reached the present site of Denver on July 5. On July 13 and 14, Dr. Edwin James, botanist and chronicler of the expedition, was the first white American to climb Pike's Peak. The party continued south to the Arkansas River and there ascended that river to the Royal Gorge. Long then descended the Arkansas to present-day La Junta, Colorado, where he divided his party, sending Captain Bell with eleven men, including Dr. James, down the Arkansas. The Bell party experienced many difficulties, including the loss of valuable manuscripts. It was during the descent of the Arkansas that the party's encounter with a grizzly caused James to record in his journal several personal occurrences which demonstrated the bears' immense strength, speed, and fearlessness, convincing James that the grizzly was the most formidable animal in the United States. In the meantime, Long, accompanied by nine men, turned south to find the headwaters of the Red River. He mistook the Canadian

River for the Red, which caused him great disappointment and reduced the success of the expedition. The two parties united again at Fort Smith in September. The reports submitted by Long concerning the country he had traversed between the Rockies and the Missouri River helped to support and give greater emphasis to the theory that persisted for another half century of a land which was felt to be uninhabitable—the Great American Desert.

THE MOUNTAIN MEN

Upper Missouri River Fur Trade

St. Louis had been a hub of fur trade activity during the Spanish occupation of Louisiana, 1763–1803. Many Spanish expeditions had ascended the Missouri River to trade with the Indians along its course. A few expeditions succeeded in pushing as far north as the Mandan villages of present-day North Dakota. Furthermore, as Lewis and Clark descended the Missouri in 1806, returning from their explorations of the Pacific Northwest, they encountered twelve separate parties which totaled twenty boats laden with trade goods pushing up the river. However, the reports that circulated in St. Louis with the return of the Lewis and Clark expedition triggered a much more extensive thrust up the Missouri in search of furs. Manuel Lisa left St. Louis with fifty-six men and two keelboats en route to the Yellowstone country, where they established Fort Raymond (Fort Manuel Lisa) at the mouth of the Bighorn River and commenced trading with the Indians of that region. So successful was the Lisa enterprise that, upon Lisa's return to St. Louis in 1808, the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was organized by several businessmen with Lisa as its principal leader. By 1810, Lisa's company had pushed into the Three Forks country of the Missouri River, deep in the heart of Blackfoot territory. The company hoped that trade relations could be opened with the British-allied Blackfoot Indians. Unfortunately, the operation failed. Several bloody encounters took place between Lisa's men and the Blackfoot. By late summer, the majority of the men had left the mountains for St. Louis or returned to the security of Fort Raymond. However, one of the partners, Andrew Henry, crossed the mountains to the south and there established the first American trading post west of the Great Divide, on Henry's Fork, a tributary of the Snake River, near present-day Rexburg, Idaho. Due to the lack of beaver and food and the desertion of several of his men, Henry abandoned the post in the spring of 1811 to return to Fort Raymond. Finding the fort nearly deserted, he collected the remaining supplies and trade goods and, accompanied by the

few men still at the fort, left for St. Louis. In October, near the Mandan villages, Henry met Lisa coming upriver from St. Louis in search of his men. Upon hearing Henry's discouraging report about the fort, the two partners returned to St. Louis.

The War of 1812 disrupted American trapping and trading activities on the upper Missouri River. The hostile feelings between Indians who had allied themselves with either the British or the Americans erupted into warfare, with both countries encouraging and supplying their Indian allies. Fur trade activities out of St. Louis ground to a stop. With the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, and the agreement to return to the same status as before the war, fur trading began to pick up once again on the western frontier. However, it took time for many of the problems to be ironed out and for feelings to subside on the upper Missouri. Finally, by 1819, the fur trade on the river again looked promising. The St. Louis Missouri Fur Company had gone through a major reorganization, with Lisa remaining as its principal figure. The government had allocated funds to the company for the Yellowstone expedition, demonstrating its support of the fur trade. But 1819 brought further setbacks. As mentioned, the Yellowstone expedition failed, and in addition the country's economy was crippled with the panic of 1819. And Lisa died in 1820. This caused only a temporary setback for the company, however, for the organization was not without leadership. Joshua Pilcher took over the management of the company and, in 1821, launched a major expedition up the Missouri River, which culminated in substantial profits for that year and the next.

Santa Fe Fur Trade

It is necessary at this point to leave the history of the fur trade of the upper Missouri River and turn our attention to that of the Southwest. With Mexican independence in 1821, the Santa Fe trade developed rapidly. Three major American trapping and trading parties left for Santa Fe in 1821, the first under the direction of William Becknell, the second led by John McKnight and Thomas James, and the third under the guidance of Hugh Glenn and Jacob Fowler. These parties opened up and gave commercial support for the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail. Santa Fe and Taos soon became the key cities for the American fur trade in the Southwest. In 1822, four American parties arrived in Santa Fe with trade goods and furs procured from the numerous rivers and streams along the way. Between 1822 and 1824, the Americans pushed west out of Santa Fe and Taos, crossed the Continental Divide, and trapped the waters of the Colorado and Green rivers. In 1826, the Ceran St. Vrain

expedition arrived in Santa Fe. This large group of men eventually divided into four parties and began trapping the Gila River and its many tributaries. Between 1827 and 1830, four trapping parties traveled from Santa Fe to California: the Richard Campbell, Sylvester Pattie, Ewing Young, and William Wolfskill-George Yount parties. The latter was responsible for establishing the Old Spanish Trail, which became the major trade route between Santa Fe and California.

During the decade of the 1830's, hundreds of men involved in the Santa Fe–California trade traveled the Old Spanish Trail. Trapping and trading parties left Santa Fe and Taos to trap the southern Rockies or to make contact with companies out of Missouri that were trapping the central and northern Rockies. Members of these expeditions, like members of those mentioned above, were to encounter the unpredictable and savage grizzly.

Ashley Men

As mentioned earlier, the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, under the direction of Joshua Pilcher had experienced financial success in 1821 and 1822. However, other events were taking place in St. Louis during those same years that were to have a profound impact on the trans-Mississippi fur trade. In 1822, William H. Ashley, then lieutenant governor of Missouri, entered the fur trade for both financial and political reasons. Joining forces with his friend, Andrew Henry, who would handle field operations, the two partners advertised, "To Enterprising Young Men—the Subscriber wishes to engage ONE HUNDRED MEN, to ascend the river Missouri to its source, there to be employed for one, two or three years." Ashley's plan was to revise the former method used by most fur companies of depending on the Indians to supply the furs. He would have his "enterprising young men" do the trapping, and trade with the Indians would become secondary. Unfortunately, due to the loss of one of their two boats and all of its supplies in 1822 and problems with Arikara Indians the following year, the two partners found themselves in financial difficulty by the summer of 1823. In desperation, Ashley divided the men into two parties under the direction of Andrew Henry and Jedediah Smith and sent them to the mountains to establish trade with the Crow Indians. These decisions and the activities that followed ultimately gave birth to the mountain man and rendezvous system. River transportation gave way to the great fur caravans, the trading post was replaced by the annual rendezvous, and the mountain man superceded the Indian as the supplier of furs.

As the Ashley–Henry men parted that summer day on the Missouri River, Smith traveled west across present-day South Dakota towards the Black Hills while Henry followed the Missouri north en route to the Yellowstone River. Within a few weeks, a member of each of those parties—Jedediah Smith and Hugh Glass—narrowly escaped death after being savagely attacked by grizzlies.

Destined to become some of the most colorful figures in American history, the trappers pursued their trade in the distant Rockies along rivers with unfamiliar yet majestic names: Bighorn, Bitterroot, Blackfoot, Wind, Rosebud, Yellowstone, Powder, Musselshell, Rio Grande, Cheyenne, Snake, Colorado, Laramie, Tongue, and others. These mountain men, who evolved from Ashley's raw recruits, acquired more information pertaining to the grizzly than any other group of people during the nineteenth century. If a list describing the nature of the grizzly bear had been compiled by mountain men from their actual experiences and sent to St. Louis to serve as a warning to the greenhorn who would be coming to the summer rendezvous, the following images of the grizzly, taken directly from the journals of these men, could have been included: no fear of man, almost impossible to kill, expert swimmers, faster than our horses, unbelievable strength, kills bison, buries kill in hole, strikes with forepaw, will return and maul victim if tormented, will avoid man if possible, tears up ground when wounded, will attack gun when fired upon, attacks horses, attacks at night, cubs are ferocious, country abounds with, does not climb tree, must have guards around camp at night for protection against, must shoot in eye or just behind ear to kill, guns only infuriate, often plays dead, attacks with open mouth, drawn into camp by food cooking, poor eyesight, will try to dig up tree or break them down when trapper has sought their safety, bites and scratches at wound with claws, large as ox, person should stand and face if attacked, will come within a few yards and stand on hind legs and look you in the eye, if you run you're dead, one shot thirty times before killed, trapper usually in shock for one-half hour after encounter with, American Fur Company pays four dollars for pelts, common to see seven or eight in berry bushes, eats berries standing on hind legs, dexterity surprising, hates noise of gun hammer, any man who singly attacks is crazy, often mistaken for buffalo until stands on hind legs, trappers would like to make truce with, and more.

For the next sixteen years, 1824–40, the mountain men in the central and northern Rockies and the trappers and traders out of Santa Fe and Taos would have innumerable encounters with the grizzly.

IN CALIFORNIA

The end of the mountain men era came quickly. By the late 1830's, the silk hat was in great demand in America and on the European market. The change in fashions had dictated the end of the beaver trade. The last rendezvous was held in 1840 at the junction of Horse Creek and the Green River, near present-day Daniels, Wyoming. As the supply caravan left on its final return trip to St. Louis, a unique lifestyle vanished. The majority of the mountain men left the Rockies. Many returned to the Missouri frontier, some pushed on to the Oregon country, and a few even stayed in the mountains to struggle at the only profession they knew. Several found their way to California, including such mountain celebrities as Andrew Sublette, James Clyman, Zenas Leonard, George Nidever, Isaac Slover, and George Yount. Almost everything that had been part of their life in the Rockies was gone, but as these men took up residency in the small Mexican villages, they found one familiar face native to the area—the grizzly.

The small California communities had accepted the grizzly in their lifestyle by the time the mountain men arrived in the 1840's. Bull and bear fights were popular among the local citizenry, as was hunting the California grizzly. The Mexican *vaqueros* became expert in roping the grizzly, and many a visitor to California marveled at their horsemanship and ability with the lariat. The mountain men found California heavily populated with grizzlies that were much bigger, equally violent, and as dangerous as those encountered on the western plains and in the Rockies. Very few mountain men had not killed their share of grizzlies in self-defense during their trapping days, and now in California they participated in the sport that slaughtered thousands of California grizzlies until the species became extinct. George Nidever's claim to have killed forty-five grizzlies in the San Luis Obispo area in 1837 was certainly not an uncommon boast for a retired mountain man. The California grizzly struggled for survival but was no match for the ever-growing population and massive rancheros which forced him from his natural habitat. Andrew Sublette, Isaac Slover, and others are excellent examples of mountain men who died from the explosive temperament of the California grizzly, not while setting traps along the banks of a nameless mountain stream, but as California hunters who became the hunted.

In conclusion, separate accounts of confrontations with grizzlies have survived from the era of the Rocky Mountain fur trade. I have attempted to select for this publication those stories that best represent the frontier period between 1805 and 1858. They make for exciting reading.

Meriwether Lewis

Meriwether Lewis

William Clark

Wm Clark

THE OBSERVATIONS

John Long—1778—North of Lake Superior

The large white bear, commonly called the grisly bear, is a very dangerous animal; when the Indians hunt it they generally go six or eight in a band; the instant they see one, they endeavour to surround it, by forming a large circle: if it is on the march they fire at it;--but it is most frequently discovered in the winter season sucking its paws; in that case they approach nearer, and form a double row for the animal to run between. One of the party is then sent out, who fires at the bear and generally wounds it: this rouzes it to pursue the Indian, who runs between the ranks, and the rest of the band fire and soon dispatch it.[1]

Meriwether Lewis—1805—Fort Benton—Missouri River

I am induced to believe that the Brown, the white and the Grizly bear of this country are the same species only differing in colour from age or more probably from the same natural cause that many other anamals of the same family differ in colour. one of those which we killed yesterday was of a creem-coloured white while the other in company with it was of the common bey or r[e]dish brown, which seems to be the most usual colour of them. the white one appeared from it's tallons and teath to be the youngest; it was smaller than the other, and although a monstrous beast we supposed that it had not yet attained it's growth and that it was a little upwards of two years old. the young cubs which we have killed have always been of a brownish white, but none of them as white as that we killed yesterday. one other that we killed sometime since which I mentioned sunk under some driftwood and was lost, had a white stripe or list of about eleven inches wide entirely arround his body just behind the shoalders, and was much darker than these bear usually are. the grizly bear we have never yet seen. I have seen their tallons in possession of the Indians and from their form I am preswaded if there is any difference between this species and the brown or white bear it is very inconsiderable. There is no such anamal as a black bear in this open country or of that species generally denominated the black bear[2]

the warriors or such as esteem themselves brave men wear collars made of the claws of the brown bear which are also esteemed of great value and are preserved with great care. these claws are ornamented with beads about the thick end near which they are peirced through their sides and strung on a throng of dressed leather and tyed about the neck commonly with the upper edge of the tallon next the breast or neck but sometimes are reversed. it is esteemed by them an act of equal celebrity the killing one of these bear or an enimy, and with the means they have of killing this animal it must really be a serious undertaking.[3]

Meriwether Lewis—1806—Kamiah, Idaho—Clearwater River

This morning early Reubin Fields in surching for his horse saw a large bear at no great distance from camp; several men went in pursuit of the bear, they followed his trail a considerable distance but could not come up with him. Labuish and Shannon set out with a view to establish a hunting camp and continuing several days, two others accompanyed them in order to bring in the three bear which Labuish had killed. Drewyer [George Drouillard] and Cruzatte were sent up the river; Shields R. Fields and Willard hunted in the hills near the camp they returned in the evening with a few pheasants only and reported that there was much late appearance of bear, but beleived that they had gone off to a greater distance. at 11 A.M. the men returned with the bear which Labuich had killed. These bear gave me a stronger evidence of the various coloured bear of this country being one speceis only, than any I have heretofore had. The female was black with a considerable proportion of white hairs intermixed and a white spot on the breast, one of the young bear was jut black and the other of a light redish brown or bey colour. the poil of these bear were infinitely longer finer and thicker than the black bear their tallons also longer and more blont as if woarn by diging roots. the white and redish brown or bey coloured bear I saw together on the Missouri; the bey and grizly have been seen and killed together here for these were the colours of those which Collins killed yesterday. in short it is not common to find two bear here of this speceis precisely of the same colour, and if we

were to attempt to distinguish them by their collours and to denominate each colour a distinct speceis we should find at least twenty. some bear nearly white have also been seen by our hunters at this place. the most striking differences between this speceis of bear and the common black bear are that the former are larger, have longer tallons and tusks, prey more on other animals, do not lie so long nor so closely in winter quarters, and will not climb a tree tho' ever so heardly pressed. the variagated bear I beleive to be the same here with those on the missouri but these are not so ferocious as those perhaps from the circumstance of their being compelled from the scarcity of game in this quarter to live more on roots and of course not so much in the habit of seizing and devouring living animals. the bear here are far from being as passive as the common black bear they have attacked and fought our hunters already but not so fiercely as those of the Missouri there are also some of the common black bear in this neighbourhood.[4]

Drewyer had wounded three bear which he said were as white as sheep but had obtained neither of them.[5]

Willard brought with him the dressed skin of a bear which he had purchased for Cap. C. this skin was an uniform pale redish brown colour, the indians informed us that it was not the *Hoh-host* or white bear. that it was the *Yack-kah*. this distinction of the indians induced us to make further enquiry relative to their opinions of the several speceis of bear in this country. we produced the several skins of the bear which we had killed at this place and one very nearly white which I had purchased. The white, the deep and pale red grizzle, the dark bro[w]n grizzle, and all those which had the extremities of the hair of a white or frosty colour without regard to the colour of the ground of the poil, they designated *Hoh-host* and assured us that they were the same with the white bear, that they ascosiated together, were very vicisious, never climbed the trees, and had much longer nails than the others. the

black skins, those which were black with a number of intire white hairs intermixed, the black with a white breast, the uniform bey, brown and light redish brown, they designated the *Yack-kah*; said that they climbed the trees, had short nails and were not vicious, that they could pursue them and kill them with safety, they also affirmed that they were much smaller than the white bear. I am disposed to adopt the Indian distinction with respect to these bear and consider them two distinct speceis. the white and the Grizzly of this neighbourhood are the same of those found on the upper portion of the Missouri where the other speceis are not, and that the uniform redish brown black &c. of this neighbourhood are a speceis distinct from our black bear and from the black bear of the Pacific coast which I believe to be the same with those of the Atlantic coast, and that the common black bear do not exist here. I had previously observed that the claws of some of the bear which we had killed here had much shorter tallons than the variagated or white bear usually have but supposed that they had woarn them out by scratching up roots, and these were those which the indians called *Yak-kah* on enquiry I found also that a cub of an uniform redish brown colour, pup to a female black bear intermixed with entire white hair had climbed a tree. I think this a distinct speceis from the common black bear, because we never find the latter of any other colour than an uniform black, and also that the poil of this bear is much finer thicker and longer with a greater proportion of fur mixed with the hair, in other [r]ispects they are much the same.[6]

John Wyeth—1832—Black Hills, Wyoming

After travelling twelve days longer we came to the Black Hills. They are so called from their thick growth of cedar. Here is the region of rattle snakes, and the largest and fiercest bears,--a very formidable animal, which it is not prudent for a man to attack alone. I have known some of the best hunters of Sublet's company to fire five and six balls at one before he fell. We were four days in crossing these dismal looking hills.[7]

Their [Buffalo] flesh is coarse beef, and the grisly bear's, coarse pork; but this kind of bear, called the *horrible* from his strength and ferocity, is a most terrific beast, and more disposed and able to feed on the hunter than the huntsman upon him.[8]

Prince Maximilian—1833—Mandan Villages, North Dakota

The Mandans and Manitaries, and all the Indians of the Upper Missouri, often wear the handsome necklace made of the claws of the grizzly bear. These claws are very large in the spring, frequently three inches long, and the points are tinged of a white colour, which is much esteemed; only the claws of the fore feet are used for necklaces, which are fastened to a strip of otter skin, lined with red cloth, and embroidered with glass beads, which hangs down the back like a long tail. Such a necklace is seldom to be had for less than twelve dollars; and very often the owners of them will not part with them on any terms.[9]

Their necklaces of bears' claws for which they often give a high price, are very large and well finished: they often contain forty claws, are attached to each shoulder, and form a semicircle across the breast. Their lock of hair on the temples is often long and curiously entwined with ornaments, and fringed at the point with small red feathers, or strips of ermine.[10]

John K. Townsend—1834—Blackfoot River, Idaho

We have sometimes taken young grizzly bears, but these little fellows, even when not larger than puppies, are so cross and snappish, that it is dangerous to handle them, and we could never become attached to any animal so ungentle, and therefore young *"Ephraim,"* (to give him his mountain cognomen,) generally meets with but little mercy from us when his evil genius throws him in our way.[11]

John K. Townsend—1834—South Fork of Boise River, Idaho

The chief is a man rather above the ordinary height, with a fine, noble countenance, and remarkably large, prominent eyes. His person, instead of being naked, as is usual, is clothed in a robe made of the skin of the mountain sheep; a broad band made of large blue beads, is fastened to the top of his head, and hangs over on his cheeks, and around his neck is suspended the foot of a huge grizzly bear. The possession of this uncouth ornament is considered among them, a great honor, since none but those whose prowess has enabled them to kill the animal, are allowed to wear it, and with their weak and inefficient weapons, the destruction of so fierce and terrible a brute, is a feat that may well entitle them to some dinstinction.[12]

Alfred Jacob Miller—1837

The hunters are in full tilt after the most formidable of all the animals met with in the journey. It is no child's play but downright dangerous sport. Strange that this should be its greatest charm to the reckless Trapper and Indian. To hunt and capture the Grizzly Bear is a signal honor and is considered a great "coup", and as we only killed nine in our journey outward it would seem that they are not plentiful.

It differs from the black bear in elongated, narrowed, and flattened muzzle, and is more than twice the size and weight. The hair is longer and finer but varies in color from dusky grey to dark brown, always more or less grizzled by intermixture, or the hair being tipped with grey. The eyes are small and the line of profile nearly straight, tail scarcely visible, breadth of fore-feet from eight to nine inches, claws on fore-feet six inches long. Their embrace, which is one of their most popular defences, is certain death to the receiver.[13]

As the grizzly bear takes precedence of all his congeners by his enormous weight, power and ferocious disposition, it is a favorable thing for the hunters that the first impulse of the animal is to escape. Indeed it is a rule with the Indians and white hunters not to attack him without a strong party and even then take care not to press him too closely.

The seasons in which they are most dangerous occur either at the time when they mate, suffer from hunger, or when they have cubs, then it is extremely judicious to let them alone.

The hair of the animal is very long towards the fall of the year and varies in colour from grey to dark brown, more or less grizzled by intermixture with grey. When in good condition they weigh from 1500 to 1800 pounds. Trappers and hunters delight to recount at the camp fire startling adventures with Bruin, to the "Green horns", enforcing, at the same time, salutary caution to fool-hardy adventurers, touching this fiercest of all animal tribe found in the mountains.[14]

Osborne Russell—1840's

Much has been said by travelers in regard to this animal, yet while giving a description of animals that inhabit the Rocky Mountains, I do not feel justified in simply passing over in silence the most ferocious species without undertaking to contribute some little information respecting it which, although it may not be important, I hope some of it at least will be new. It lives chiefly upon roots and berries, being of too slow a nature to live much upon game of its own killing, and from May to September it never tastes flesh. The rutting season is in November and the female brings forth from one to three at a birth. I have not been able to ascertain the precise time that the female goes with young, but I suppose from experience and inquiry it is about fourteen weeks. The young are untameable and manifest a savage ferocity when scarcely old enough to crawl. Several experiments have been tried in the Rocky Mountains for taming them, but to no effect. They are possessed of great muscular strength. I have seen a female, which was wounded by a rifle ball in the loins so as to disable her, kill her young with one stroke of her forepaws as fast as they approached her. If a young cub is wounded and commences making a noise, the mother invariably springs upon it and kills it. When grown they never make a noise except a fearful growl. They get to be fatter than any other animals in the Rocky Mountains during the season when wild fruit is abundant. The flesh of the grizzly is preferable to pork. It lives in winter in caves in the rocks or holes dug in the ground on high ridges. It loses no flesh while confined to its den during the winter, but is equally as fat in the spring when it leaves the den as when it enters it at the beginning of the winter. There is seldom to be found more than one in a den excepting the female and her young. I have seen them measure

seven feet from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail. It will generally run from the scent of a man, but when it does not get the scent it will often let him approach close enough to spring on him and when wounded it is a dangerous animal to trifle with. Its speed is comparatively slow down hill but much greater in ascending. It never climbs trees, as its claws are too straight for that purpose.[15]

Father Pierre Jean de Smet—1841—Gallatin River, Montana

This region is the retreat of grizzly bears, the most terrible animals of the desert, whose strength equals their daring and voracity. I have been assured that by a single stroke of his paw, one of these animals tore away four ribs of a buffalo, which fell dead at his feet. He seldom attacks man, unless when he has been surprised and wounded.--An Indian, however, belonging to my escort, in passing by a thick wood of sallow trees, was assailed by one of these ferocious beasts, that sprung furiously upon his horse, fixed his formidable claws in his back, and brought him to the ground. The horseman fortunately was not mounted at the time, and having his gun in his hand, the bear instantly disappeared in the depths of the forest.[16]

James Clyman—1845—Northern California

all the bear in this country are of grisled or grey species and are extremely dangerous when wounded and in fact frequently attact the hunter or other passenger without any provocation Except being inturupted in their lair Therefore the hunter has to be verry cautious in his approach and scarcely ever attempts to drive him out of his fastnesses Their time of feeding being in the night the hunter watches him late in the Evening or Early in the morning when he is going to or returning from his feeding grounds Taking if possible the advantage of some inexcessable cliff of rocks Bank or Tree or is mounted on a good swift horse off of which he shoots never dismounting untill the bear is dead generally two or three men go in company and when the bear is discovered they all aproach in good rifle distance one firing one at a time in slow succession when if their balls take a good impression it so confuses the animal that he is kept continually fighting the ball holes which he never fails to do so that he has no time to attact the hunters untill it is to late--one which we had the Luck to kill was seen passing to his lair in the

morning after sun rise two men attacted him and gave him five shots at a vital part of his body when he made his Escape to an allmost impenatrable thicket in an hour after three of us well mounted followed him more than a mile whare we found him badly wounded and in good disposition for a fight I however had the luck to get a shot at him takeing him close behind the shoulder when he broke back for a desperate thicket several guns ware fired at him on his retreat but he made his Lair and defied all our methods to draw him out again untill one man at the risk of himself and horse ventured in to the thicket cutting open a retreat with his butcher Knife at length the bear charged on him the other man standing on an Eminence shot at him as he passed an open aperture through the brush and had the luck to shoot him in the head on butchering him we found nine balls had taken good effect but owing to the greate thickness of the fat on his sides only one had passed in to his lungs he proved to be a noble animal yeelding more than three Hundred pounds of oil--[17]

F. A. Wislizenus—1839—Near Thomas Creek, Idaho

The grizzly bear (*Ursus horribilis*, Ord.) is distinguished from other members of the bear family by the almost straight profile of his face and by his longer claws. The hair, short on the forehead and long and thick on the rest of the body, shows a peculiar mixture of white, brown and black, with many shadings. The ears are short and rounded; the forehead somewhat convex. The eyes are very small. The short tail is hidden in the shaggy hair. The curved claws are three to five inches long. The whole length of the full grown bear is about ten feet; his height, three to four feet; his weight, seven hundred to eight hundred pounds. He cannot climb trees like the black bear, but has fearful strength and dexterity. He often drags a whole buffalo for some distance, and runs almost as fast as a horse. He lives partly on meat, partly on fruits and roots. He is found oftener on the eastern than on the western side of the Rocky Mountains. When he is hungry or has been irritated he attacks whatever comes in his way. One blow of his paw is enough to knock a man down. But under other circumstances he runs away from man, and defends himself only when pursued. With such qualities it is no wonder that he is the dread of hunters. A bullet through brain or heart will end him, but in all other parts of the body he survives numerous wounds. A good hunter therefore, does not shoot until he is within ten or twenty feet of him. When the females are with young they live very retired, so that I have never

heard of a hunter that shot a pregnant grizzly she bear. The meat of the grizzly is very palatable. Along the back there is solid white fat, a hand thick. The grizzly we found on this occasion was still young. The dogs of the Indians discovered him in a thicket, but he wouldn't budge from it. The Indians surrounded him on horseback, and shot at him. Whenever he assumed a threatening attitude, they all ran away. The dogs, however, seemed to check his anger. He would not leave his hiding place. Finally one of our hunters approached within ten feet of him, and laid him low with a single bullet.[18]

Dick Wootton

There was one native of the Rocky Mountain region which the hunters and trappers always made a point of dealing with very cautiously and circumspectly, and that was the grizzly bear. . . . There used to be a great many of them in the mountains, but we rarely hear of one now. They have a strong aversion to civilization, and have gotten as far away from the settlements as they could get.

My experience has been that the bear will always sacrifice his reputation for courage to avoid a conflict with the hunter, provided the hunter makes no hostile demonstration when they come in contact with each other.[19]

Kit Carson

The pleasantest episode of my visit here has been the society of KIT CARSON, with whom I passed three days, I need hardly say delightfully. He is one of the few men I ever met who can talk long hours to you of what he has seen, and yet say very little about himself. He has to be drawn out. I had many questions to ask, and his answers were all marked by great distinctness of memory, simplicity, candor, and a desire to make some one else, rather than himself, the hero of his story. In answer to queries concerning Indians, he would frequently reply--unlike so many I have met who knew *all* about them--"I don't know,"--"I can't say," . . .

The conversation turning on grizzly bears, I read to him the following extract from a scientific work:--

> "Middendorff (*Sibirsche Reise*), in an exceedingly elaborate article on the *Ursus arctus*, in the course of which he discusses the characteristics of over fifty different skulls, decides that all European

Kit Carson

bears belong to one species, of many varieties. In comparing the grizzly bear with the *Ursus arctus*, he finds so few differences as to be inclined to consider both as the same; *the size of the grizzly, as well as its weight of 800 pounds*, he thinks overestimated; and even admitting a weight of 800 pounds, mentions a bear of the Ural of this magnitude, according to Eversman. The long claws of the grizzly he admits to exceed those of the Old World bear, but is not certain that all of the former species have an equal development in this respect."

The recognized superiority of the American grizzly evidently annoys the European professor; and the whole passage, and particularly the idea of comparing any other bear with the grizzly, amused Carson very much. He laughed outright. "I have often and again seen grizzlies," said he, "of ten, eleven, and twelve hundred pounds. I distinctly remember killing one in the spring of 1846, that weighed 1200 pounds. Lieutenant Beale told me that he saw one of 1800. Trappers have often told me of numbers rising that weight, and I have no reason to doubt them."[20]

Pierre Jean de Smet

P. J. De Smet S. J.

Stephen H. Long

THE EXPEDITIONS

By mid-April of 1805, the Lewis and Clark expedition was nearing the mouth of the Yellowstone River in present-day North Dakota. For several days they had been anticipating their first encounter with the legendary white bear. Prior to the expedition's departure from St. Louis, many individuals had recounted stories boasting of personal encounters with the ferocious animal. Indians questioned during the expedition's ascent of the Missouri River and at winter encampment at Fort Mandan heightened their anticipation of contact and combat with the animal held in such high esteem by the natives. When the expedition arrived at the mouth of the Little Missouri River on April 13, 1805, signs were plentiful, suggesting a prompt confrontation. [1]

we saw also many tracks of the white bear of enormous size, along the river shore and about the carcases of the Buffaloe, on which I presume they feed. we have not as yet seen one of these anamals, tho' their tracks are so abundant and recent. the men as well as ourselves are anxious to meet with some of these bear. the Indians give a very formidable account of the streng[t]h and ferocity of this anamal, which they never dare to attack but in parties of six eight or ten persons; and are even then frequently defeated with the loss of one or more of their party. the savages attack this anamal with their bows and arrows and the indifferent guns with which the traders furnish them, with these they shoot with such uncertainty and at so short a distance, that *(unless shot thro' head or heart wound not mortal)* they frequently mis their aim & fall a sacrefice to the bear. two Minetaries were killed during the last winter in an attack on a white bear. this anamall is said more frequently to attack a man on meeting with him, than to flee from him. When the Indians are about to go in quest of the white bear, previous to their departure, they paint themselves and perform all those supersticious rights commonly observed when they are about to make war uppon a neighbouring nation.[21] [Lewis]

The party made their night camp on April 28 twenty-four miles upstream from the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. At

THE EXPEDITIONS, 1804–1820

Lewis and Clark Expedition, 1804–1806

Overland Astorian Expedition, 1811–1812; Long Expedition, 1820

8:00 A.M., shortly after breaking camp on April 29, Captain Lewis encountered his first grizzly. [2]

we fell in with two brown or yellow [*white*] bear; both of which we wounded; one of them made his escape, the other after my firing on him pursued me seventy or eighty yards, but fortunately had been so badly wounded that he was unable to pursue so closely as to prevent my charging my gun; we again repeated our fir[e] and killed him. it was a male not fully grown, we estimated his weight at 300 lbs. not having the means of ascertaining it precisely. The legs of this bear are somewhat longer than those of the black, as are it's tallons and tusks incomparably larger and longer. the testicles, which in the black bear are placed pretty well back between the thyes and contained in one pouch like those of the dog and most quadrupeds, are in the yellow or brown bear placed much further forward, and are suspended in separate pouches from two to four inches asunder; it's colour is yellowish brown, the eyes small, black, and piercing; the front of the fore legs near the feet is usually black; the fur is finer thicker and deeper than that of the black bear. these are all the particulars in which this anamal appeared to me to differ from the black bear; it is a much more furious and formidable anamal, and will frequently pursue the hunter when wounded. it is asstonishing to see the wounds they will bear before they can be put to death. the Indians may well fear this anamal equiped as they generally are with their bows and arrows or indifferent fuzees, but in the hands of skillfull riflemen they are by no means as formidable or dangerous as they have been represented.[22] [Lewis]

Captain Clark left camp early on the morning of May 5. A broken rudder iron detained the expedition until after breakfast. Both Lewis and Clark recorded the beauty of the surrounding country and the abundance of game. The expedition was now forty-seven miles above the mouth of the Poplar River, 116 miles upstream from the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers. In the evening while walking on shore with George Drouillard, Captain Clark observed a "Brown or Grisley beare on a sand beech." [3]

Capt. Clark and Drewyer killed the largest brown bear this evening which we have yet seen. it was a most tremendious looking anamal, and extreemly hard to kill notwithstanding he had five balls through his lungs and five others in various parts he swam more than half the distance

acoss the river to a sandbar, & it was at least twenty minutes before he died; he did not attempt to attack, but fled and made the most tremendous roaring from the moment he was shot. We had no means of weighing this monster; Capt. Clark thought he would weigh 500 lbs. for my own part I think the estimate too small by 100 lbs. he measured 8 Feet 7 1/2 Inches from the nose to the extremety of the hind feet, 5 F. 10 1/2 Ins. arround the breast, 1 F. 11. I. arround the middle of the arm, & 3. F. 11. I. arround the neck; his tallons which were five in number on each foot were 4 3/8 Inches in length. he was in good order, we therefore divided him among the party and made them boil the oil and put it in a cask for future use; the oil is as hard as hogs lard when cool, much more so than that of the black bear. this bear differs from the common black bear in several respects; it's tallons are much longer and more blont, it's tale shorter, it's hair which is of a redish or bey brown, is longer thicker and finer than that of the black bear; his liver lungs and heart are much larger even in proportion with his size; the heart particularly was as large as that of a large Ox. his maw was also ten times the size of black bear, and was filled with flesh and fish. his testicles were pendant from the belly and placed four inches assunder in seperate bags or pouches. this animal also feeds on roots and almost every species of wild fruit.[23] [Lewis]

By early May, bear signs went in every direction along the river. On May 6, fifteen miles upstream from the camp of the previous day, Captain Lewis observed a grizzly swimming the river. The expedition was now sixty-eight miles from the mouth of the Poplar River. Lewis's entry in his journal concerning this bear indicates the impact that closer observations of the grizzly were having on the attitude of his men toward hunting this formidable animal. [4]

saw a brown bear swim the river above us, he disappeared before we can get in reach of him; I find that the curiossity of our party is pretty well satisfyed with rispect to this anamal, the formidable appearance of the male bear killed on the 5th. added to the difficulty with which they die when even shot through the vital parts, has staggered the resolution [of] several of them, others however seem keen for action with the bear; I expect these gentlemen will give us some amusement sho[r]tly as they [the bears—ED.] soon begin now to coppolate [copulate].[24] [Lewis]

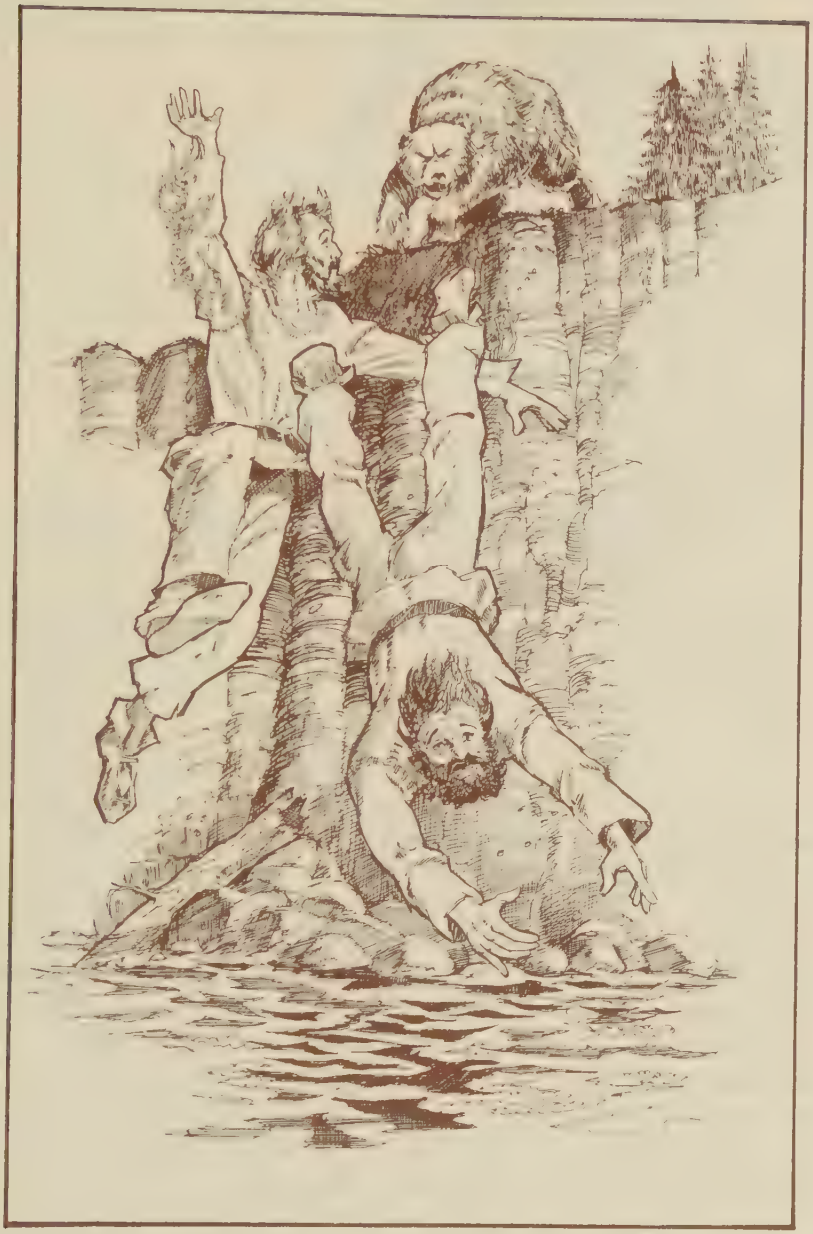
On the evening of May 11, approximately twenty miles upstream from present-day Fort Peck, Montana, William Bratton narrowly escaped from a wounded grizzly, which pursued him a considerable distance. Once again, the tremendous strength of the bear and the inability of the hunters to kill the grizzly was an intimidating force to the men of the expedition. [5]

About 5. P. M. my attention was struck by one of the Party runing at a distance towards us and making signs and hollowing as if in distress, I ordered the perogues to put too, and waited untill he arrived; I now found that it was Bratton the man with the soar hand whom I had permitted to walk on shore, he arrived so much out of breath that it was several minutes before he could tell what had happened; at length he informed me that in the woody bottom on the Lard. side about 1 1/2 [miles] below us he had shot a brown bear which immediately turned on him and pursued him a considerable distance but he had wounded it so badly that it could not overtake him; I immediately turned out with seven of the party in quest of this monster, we at length found his trale and persued him about a mile by the blood through very thick brush of rosbushes and the large leafed willow; we finally found him concealed in some very thick brush and shot him through the skull with two balls; we proceeded [to] dress him as soon as possible, we found him in good order; it was a monstrous beast, not quite so large as that we killed a few days past but in all other rispects much the same the hair is remarkably long fine and rich tho' he appears parshally to have discharged his winter coat; we now found that Bratton had shot him through the center of the lungs, notwithstanding which he had pursued him near half a mile and had returned more than double that distance and with his tallons had prepared himself a bed in the earth of about 2 feet deep and five long and was perfectly alive when we found him which could not have been less than 2 hours after he received the wound; these bear being so hard to die reather intimedates us all; I must confess that I do not like the gentlemen and had reather fight two Indians than one bear; there is no other chance to conquer them by a single shot but by shooting them through the brains, and this becomes difficult in consequence of two large muscles which cover the sides of the forehead and the sharp projection of the center of the frontal bone, which is also of a pretty good thickness. the flece and skin were as much as two men could possibly carry. by the time we returned the sun had set and I determined to remain here all night, and directed the cooks to render the bear's oil and put it in the kegs which was done. there was about eight gallons of it.[25] [Lewis]

Because they feared to hunt the grizzly alone, the men developed a strategy to kill the enormous animal. This is made evident in the following account recorded by Captain Lewis on May 14. The expedition was seventy miles downstream from the mouth of the Musselshell River and 272 miles from the Yellowstone River. [6]

one of the party wounded a brown bear very badly, but being alone did not think proper to pursue him. In the evening the men in two of the rear canoes discovered a large brown bear lying in the open grounds about 300 paces from the river, and six of them went out to attack him, all good hunters; they took the advantage of a small eminence which concealed them and got within 40 paces of him unperceived, two of them reserved their fires as had been previously conscerted, the four others fired nearly at the same time and put each his bullet through him, two of the balls passed through the bulk of both lobes of his lungs, in an instant this monster ran at them with open mouth, the two who had reserved their fir[e]s discharged their pieces at him as he came towards them, boath of them struck him, one only slightly and the other fortunately broke his shoulder, this however only retarded his motion for a moment only, the men unable to reload their guns took to flight, the bear pursued and had very nearly overtaken them before they reached the river; two of the party betook themselves to a canoe and the others seperated an[d] concealed themselves among the willows, reloaded their pieces, each discharged his piece at him as they had an opportunity they struck him several times again but the guns served only to direct the bear to them, in this manner he pursued two of them seperately so close that they were obliged to throw aside their guns and pouches and throw themselves into the river altho' the bank was nearly twenty feet perpendicular; so enraged was this anamal that he plunged into the river only a few feet behind the second man he had compelled [to] take refuge in the water, when one of those who still remained on shore shot him through the head and finally killed him; they then took him on shore and butch[er]ed him when they found eight balls had passed through him in different directions; the bear being old the flesh was indifferent, they therefore only took the skin and fleece, the latter made us several gallons of oil.[26] [Lewis]

On June 2, at the mouth of the Marias River, Captain Lewis walked on shore most of the day hunting for camp meat. His journal entry concerning George Drouillard and Toussaint Charbonneau's encounter with



he pursued two of them seperately so close that they were obliged to throw aside their guns and pouches and throw themselves into the river

a grizzly suggests that the members of the expedition were beginning to realize the importance of a carefully placed head shot to kill the monster. [7]

Accordingly I walked on shore most of the day with some of the hunters for that purpose and killed 6 Elk 2 buffal[o]e 2 Mule deer and a bear, these anamals were all in good order we therefore took as much of the meat as our canoes and perogues could conveniently carry. the bear was very near catching Drewyer; it also pursued Charbono who fired his gun in the air as he ran but fortunately eluded the vigilence of the bear by secreting himself very securely in the bushes untill Drewyer finally killed it by a shot in the head; the *(only)* shot indeed that will conquer the farocity of those tremendious anamals.[27] [Lewis]

As the expedition neared the Great Falls of the Missouri River on June 14, Captain Lewis left the main party to explore the rapids and falls. While in the vicinity of the Sun River on his return to camp, Lewis decided to kill a buffalo for camp meat from a herd numbering well over 1000 that he discovered feeding along the Missouri. After shooting a buffalo, he failed to immediately reload. As a consequence, Captain Lewis learned a very valuable lesson. [8]

under this impression I scelected a fat buffaloe and shot him very well, through the lungs; while I was gazeing attentively on the poor anamal discharging blood in streams from his mouth and nostrils, expecting him to fall every instant, and having entirely forgotten to reload my rifle, a large white, or reather brown bear, had perceived and crept on me within 20 steps before I discovered him; in the first moment I drew up my gun to shoot, but at the same instant recolected that she was not loaded and that he was too near for me to hope to perform this opperation before he reached me, as he was then briskly advancing on me; it was an open level plain, not a bush within miles nor a tree within less than three hundred yards of me; the river bank was sloping and not more than three feet above the level of the water; in short there was no place by means of which I could conceal myself from this monster untill I could charge my rifle; in this situation I thought of retreating in a brisk walk as fast as he was advancing untill I could reach a tree about 300 yards below me, but I had no sooner terned myself about but he pitched at me, open mouthed and full speed, I ran about 80 yards and

Manuel Lisa

found he gained on me fast, I then run into the water the idea struk me to get into the water to such debth that I could stand and he would be obliged to swim, and that I could in that situation defend myself with my espontoon; accordingly I ran haistily into the water about waist deep, and faced about and presented the point of my espontoon, at this instant he arrived at the edge of the water within about 20 feet of me; the moment I put myself in this attitude of defence he sudonly wheeled about as if frightened, declined the combat on such unequal grounds, and retreated with quite as great precipitation as he had just before pursued me. as soon as I saw him run of[f] in that manner I returned to the shore and charged my gun, which I had still retained in my hand throughout this curious adventure. I saw him run through the level open plain about three miles, till he disappeared in the woods on medecine river; during the whole of this distance he ran at full speed, sometimes appearing to look behind him as if he expected pursuit. I now began to reflect on this novil occurrence and indeavoured to account for this sudden retreat of the bear. I at first thought that perhaps he had not smelt me bofore he arrived at the waters edge so near me, but I then reflected that he had pursued me for about 80 or 90 yards before I took [to] the water and on examination saw the grownd toarn with his tallons immediately on the imp[r]ession of my steps; and the cause of his allarm still remains with me misterious and unaccountable. so it was and I felt myself not a little

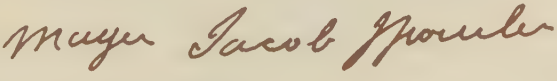
I ran haistily into the water about waist deep, and faced about and presented the point of my espontoon, at this instant he arrived at the edge of the water within about 20 feet of me

gratifyed that he had declined the combat. my gun reloaded I felt confidence once more in my strength; and determined not to be thwarted in my design of visiting medecine river, but determined never again to suffer my peice to be longer empty than the time she necessarily required to charge her.[28] [Lewis]

The expedition spent several weeks in portaging the Great Falls. While encamped in this vicinity, the men found the area, especially the islands above the falls in the main channel of the Missouri River, to be heavily populated with white bear. On June 18, Alexander Willard was pursued by a white bear and, on June 25, Joseph Fields narrowly escaped death by jumping over a steep bank into the river. George Drouillard and Joseph Fields returned to camp on June 27 with the largest white bear killed up to that time on the expedition.

Lewis's journal entry of June 28 reflects that it was becoming dangerous to send a single man on errands around the Great Falls portage. Several hunts, including the one of July 2, were organized on the islands to eliminate the troublesome animal. [9–13]

this evening, one man A. Willard going for a load of meat at 170 yards distance on an Island was attact by a white bear and verry near being caught, prosued within 40 yards of camp where I was with one man I collected 3 others of the party and prosued the bear (who had prosued my track from a buffalow I had killed on the Island at about 300 yards distance and chance[d] to meet Willard) for fear of his attacking one man Colter at the lower point of the Island, before we had got down the bear had allarmed the man and prosued him into the water, at our approach he retreated, and we relieved the man in the water, I saw the bear but the bushes was so thick that I could not shoot him and it was nearly dark.[29] [Clark]



about noon Fields returned and informed me that he had seen two white bear near the river a few miles above and in attempting to get a shoot [at] them had stumbled uppon a third which immediately made at him being only a few steps distant; that in runing in order to escape from the bear he had leaped down a steep bank of the river on a stony bar where

in running in order to escape from the bear he had leaped down a steep bank of the river on a stoney bar where he fell cut his hand bruised his knees and bent his gun

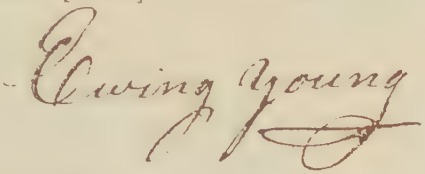
he fell cut his hand bruised his knees and bent his gun, that fortunately for him the bank hid him from the bear when he fell and that by that means he had escaped. this man has been truly unfortunate with these bear, this is the second time that he has narrowly escaped from them.[30] [Lewis]

soon after this storm was over Drewyer and J. Fields returned. . . . They had killed 9 Elk and three bear during their absence; one of the bear was the largest by far that we have yet seen; the skin appear[ed] to me to be as large as a common ox. while hunting they saw a thick brushey bottom on the bank of the river where from the tracks along shore they suspected that there were bare concealed; they therefore landed without making any nois and climbed a leaning tree and placed themselves on it's branches about 20 feet above the ground, when thus securely fixed they gave a [w]hoop and this large bear instantly rushed forward to the place from whence he had heard the human voice issue, when he arrived at the tree he made a short paus and Drewyer shot him in the head. it is worthy of remark that these bear never climb. the fore feet of this bear measured nine inches across and the hind feet eleven and 3/4 in length exclusive of the tallons and seven inches in width. a bear came within thirty yards of our camp last night and eat up about thirty weight of buffaloe suit which was hanging on a pole. my dog seems to be in a constant state of alarm with these bear and keeps barking all night.[31] [Lewis]

The White bear have become so troublesome to us that I do not think it prudent to send one man alone on an errand of any kind, particularly where he has to pass through the brush. we have seen two of them on the large Island opposite to us today but are so much engaged that we could not spare the time to hunt them but will make a frolick of it when the party return and drive them from these islands. they come close arround our camp every night but have never yet ventured to attack us and our dog gives us timely notice of their visits, he keeps constantly padroling

climbed a leaning tree and placed themselves on it's branches about 20 feet above the ground, when thus securely fixed they gave a [w]hoop and this large bear instantly rushed forward to the place from whence he had heard the human voice issue

all night. I have made the men sleep with their arms by them as usual for fear of accedents.[32] [Lewis]



. . . Capt. Clark Myself and 12 men passed over to the large Island to hunt bear. the brush in that part of it where the bear frequent is an almost impenitrable thicket of the broad leafed willow; this brush we entered in small parties of 3 or four together and surched in every part. we found one only which made at Drewyer and he shot him in the brest at the distance of about 20 feet, the ball fortunately passed through his heart, the stroke knocked the bear down and gave Drewyer time to get out of his sight; the bear changed his course we pursued him about 100 yards by the blood and found him dead; we surched the thicket in every part but found no other, and therefore returned. this was a young male and would weigh about 400 lbs.[33] [Lewis]

The expedition spent the winter of 1805–06 at Fort Clatsop near the mouth of the Columbia River. With the coming of spring, Lewis and Clark started their homeward journey. Lewis split up the expedition near Lolo Pass, sending Captain Clark to explore the Yellowstone River while he pushed on to the caches at the Great Falls. On July 12, Lewis sent Joseph Fields and George Drouillard in search of seven lost horses. Fields returned that evening but Drouillard remained absent for three days, returning in the afternoon of July 15. He reported to Lewis that a party of Tushapahs had stolen the animals; however, he had not pursued them due to the fatigue of his horse. Lewis states that he was greatly relieved with the return of Drouillard since he had feared that Drouillard had ***been killed by a white bear.*** [14]

his safe return has releived me from great anxiety. I had already settled it in my mind that a white-bear had killed him and should have set out tomorrow in surch of him, and if I could not find him to continue my rout to Maria's river. I knew that if he met with a bear in the plains even he would attack him. and that if any accedent should happen to seperate him from his horse in that situation the chances in favour of his being killed would be as 9 to 10. I felt so perfectly satisfyed that he had returned

in safety that I thought but little of the horses although they were seven of the best I had.[34] [Lewis]

Lewis pushed on from the Great Falls to explore the Marias River, where his famous encounter with the Minnetaree Indians of Fort de Prairie took place on July 27, 1806. By August, Lewis and his companions were descending the Missouri River by boat to rendezvous with Clark and his company at the mouth of the Yellowstone River. On August 1, while floating the river a few miles upstream from the mouth of the Musselshell River, Lewis and Drouillard encountered a grizzly swimming the river. [15]

at 9. A. M. we saw a large brown bear swiming from an island to the main shore we pursued him and as he landed Drewyer and myself shot and killed him; we took him on board the perogue and continued our rout.[35] [Lewis]

It rained all day on August 1. Fifteen miles below the mouth of the Musselshell River, Lewis put in to shore to establish the night camp and to build fires to dry their wet gear. Soon after setting up camp, the men were visited by a white bear. [16]

a white bear came within 50 paces of our camp before we perceived it; it stood erect on it's hinder feet and looked at us with much apparent unconsern, we seized our guns which are always by us and several of us fired at it and killed it. it was a female in fine order, we fleesed it and extracted several gallons of oil. this speceis of bear are nearly as poor at this season of the year as the common black bear nor are they ever as fat as the black bear is found in winter; as they feed principally on flesh, like the wolf, they are most fatt when they can procure a sufficiency of food without rispect to the season of the year. the oil of this bear is much harder than that of the black bear being nearly as much so as the lard of a hog. the flesh is by no means as agreeable as that of the black bear, or Yahkah or partycoloured bear of the West side of the rocky mountains.[36] [Lewis]

On the morning of August 2, while descending the Yellowstone River about seventy-five miles from its confluence with the Missouri River, Captain Clark encountered a large grizzly which left a sand bar and swam

a white bear came within 50 paces of our camp before we perceived it; it stood erect on it's hinder feet and looked at us with much apparent unconsern

toward the boat. Also that evening, about forty miles downstream from the grizzly encounter of that morning, Clark killed the largest female bear he had ever seen. [17–18]

about 8 A. M. this morning a Bear of the large vicious species being on a Sand bar raised himself up on his hind feet and looked at us as we passed down near the middle of the river. he plunged into the water and swam towards us, either from a disposition to attack't or from the cent of the meat which was in the canoes. we Shot him with three balls and he returned to Shore badly wounded. in the evening I saw a very large Bear take the water above us. I ordered the boat to land on the opposit side with a view to attack't him when he came within shot of the shore. when the bear was in a fiew paces of the Shore I shot it in the head. the men hauled her on Shore and proved to be an old Shee which was so old that her tuskes had worn Smooth, and Much the largest feemale bear I ever saw.[37] [Clark]

In mid-August of 1811, the Astorians, under the command of Wilson Price Hunt, were forced to travel in a southwesterly direction to find a pass which would permit them to traverse the Black Hills of South Dakota. Wilson Hunt and Donald McKenzie climbed a small hill near their camp to survey the country which lay ahead. "Aided by the purity and transparency of the evening atmosphere," *they could see the snow-capped Bighorn Mountains. While they were enjoying the panorama which lay before them, events were transpiring in camp that were to cause these leaders great concern. Washington Irving, the author of the following excerpt, does not cite his source.* [19]

On returning to the camp Mr. Hunt found some uneasiness prevailing among the Canadian voyageurs. In straying among the thickets they had beheld tracks of grizzly bears in every direction, doubtless attracted thither by the fruit. To their dismay, they now found that they had encamped in one of the favorite resorts of this dreaded animal. The idea marred all the comfort of the encampment. As night closed, the surrounding thickets were peopled with terrors; insomuch that, according to Mr. Hunt, they could not help starting at every little breeze that stirred the bushes.

The grizzly bear is the only really formidable quadruped of our continent. He is the favorite theme of the hunters of the far West, who describe him as equal in size to a common cow and of prodigious strength.

about 8 A. M. this morning a Bear of the large vicious species being on a Sand bar raised himself up on his hind feet and looked at us as we passed down near the middle of the river

He makes battle if assailed, and often, if pressed by hunger, is the assailant. If wounded, he becomes furious and will pursue the hunter. His speed exceeds that of a man, but is inferior to that of a horse. In attacking he rears himself on his hind legs, and springs the length of his body. Woe to horse or rider that comes within the sweep of his terrific claws, which are sometimes nine inches in length and tear everything before them.

At the time we are treating of, the grizzly bear was still frequent on the Missouri, and in the lower country, but, like some of the broken tribes of the prairie, he has gradually fallen back before his enemies, and is now chiefly to be found in the upland regions, in rugged fastnesses, like those of the Black Hills and the Rocky Mountains. Here he lurks in caverns, or holes which he has digged in the sides of hills, or under the roots and trunks of fallen trees. Like the common bear he is fond of fruits, and mast, and roots, the latter of which he will dig up with his fore claws. He is carnivorous also, and will even attack and conquer the lordly buffalo, dragging his huge carcass to the neighborhood of his den, that he may prey upon it at his leisure.

The hunters, both white and red men, consider this the most heroic game. They prefer to hunt him on horseback, and will venture so near as sometimes to singe his hair with the flash of the rifle. The hunter of the grizzly bear, however, must be an experienced hand, and know where to aim at a vital part; for of all quadrupeds he is the most difficult to be killed. He will receive repeated wounds without flinching, and rarely is a shot mortal unless through the head or heart.

That the dangers apprehended from the grizzly bear, at this night encampment, were not imaginary, was proved on the following morning. Among the hired men of the party was one William Cannon, who had been a soldier at one of the frontier posts, and entered into the employ of Mr. Hunt at Mackinaw. He was an inexperienced hunter and a poor shot, for which he was much bantered by his more adroit comrades. Piqued at their raillery, he had been practising ever since he had joined the expedition, but without success. In the course of the present afternoon, he went forth by himself to take a lesson in venerie, and, to his great delight, had the good fortune to kill a buffalo. As he was a considerable distance from the camp, he cut out the tongue and some of the choice bits, made them into a parcel, and, slinging them on his shoulders by a strap passesd round his forehead, as the voyageurs carry packages of goods, set out all glorious for the camp, anticipating a triumph over his brother hunters. In passing through a narrow ravine he heard a noise behind him, and looking round beheld, to his dismay, a grizzly bear in full pursuit, apparently

attracted by the scent of the meat. Cannon had heard so much of the invulnerability of this tremendous animal, that he never attempted to fire, but, slipping the strap from his forehead, let go the buffalo meat and ran for his life. The bear did not stop to regale himself with the game, but kept on after the hunter. He had nearly overtaken him when Cannon reached a tree, and, throwing down his rifle, scrambled up it. The next instant Bruin was at the foot of the tree; but, as this species of bear does not climb, he contented himself with turning the chase into a blockade. Night came on. In the darkness Cannon could not perceive whether or not the enemy maintained his station; but his fears pictured him rigorously mounting guard. He passed the night, therefore, in the tree, a prey to dismal fancies. In the morning the bear was gone. Cannon warily descended the tree, gathered up his gun, and made the best of his way back to the camp, without venturing to look after his buffalo meat.[38]

Washington Irving does not give the source, location, or date of the following incident involving John Day. However, it took place during the time that the Astorians sojourned in present-day South Dakota, Wyoming, or Idaho.

While on this theme we will add another anecdote of an adventure with a grizzly bear, told of John Day, the Kentucky hunter, but which happened at a different period of the expedition. Day was hunting in company with one of the clerks of the company, a lively youngster, who was a great favorite with the veteran, but whose vivacity he had continually to keep in check. They were in search of deer, when suddenly a huge grizzly bear emerged from a thicket about thirty yards distant, rearing himself upon his hind legs with a terrific growl, and displaying a hideous array of teeth and claws. The rifle of the young man was levelled in an instant, but John Day's iron hand was as quickly upon his arm. "Be quiet, boy! be quiet!" exclaimed the hunter, between his clenched teeth, and without turning his eyes from the bear. They remained motionless. The monster regarded them for a time, then, lowering himself on his fore paws, slowly withdrew. He had not gone many paces before he again turned, reared himself on his hind legs, and repeated his menace. Day's hand was still on the arm of his young companion; he again pressed it hard, and kept repeating between his teeth, "Quiet, boy!--keep quiet!--keep quiet!" though the latter had not made a move since his first prohibition. The bear again lowered himself on all fours, retreated some

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twenty yards further, and again turned, reared, showed his teeth, and growled. This third menace was too much for the game spirit of John Day. "By Jove!" exclaimed he, "I can stand this no longer," and in an instant a ball from his rifle whizzed into the foe. The wound was not mortal; but, luckily, it dismayed instead of enraging the animal, and he retreated into the thicket.

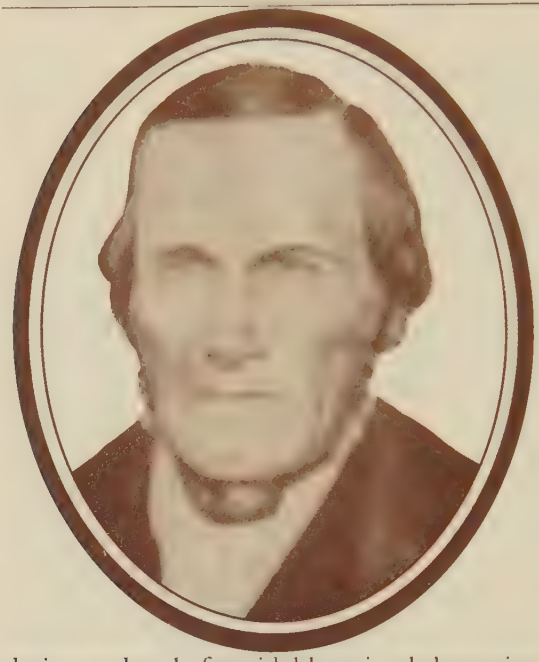
Day's young companion reproached him for not practising the caution which he enjoined upon others. "Why, boy," replied the veteran, "caution is caution, but one must not put up with too much even from a bear. Would you have me suffer myself to be bullied all day by a varmint?"[39]

On November 2, 1812, Robert Stuart, en route from Fort Astoria to St. Louis, established his winter camp twelve miles southwest of present-day Casper, Wyoming. This site along the North Platte River was chosen for its abundance of fuel, water, and the numerous buffalo herds. Washington Irving does not document the following account of Ramsay Crooks nor does the Wilson Hunt diary contain any reference to its occurrence. However, Hunt's diary does confirm the slaughter of the buffalo at this location and the killing of a white bear on November 12. [20]

It was soon discovered, however, that there was game of a more dangerous nature in the neighborhood. On one occasion Mr. Crooks had wandered about a mile from the camp, and had ascended a small hill commanding a view of the river. He was without his rifle, a rare circumstance, for in these wild regions, where one may put up a wild animal, or a wild Indian, at every turn, it is customary never to stir from the camp-fire unarmed. The hill where he stood overlooked the place where the massacre of the buffalo had taken place. As he was looking around on the prospect his eye was caught by an object below, moving directly toward him. To his dismay he discovered it to be a grizzly bear, with two cubs. There was no tree at hand into which he could climb; to run would only be to provoke pursuit, and he should soon be overtaken. He threw himself on the ground, therefore, and lay motionless, watching the movements of the animal with intense anxiety. It continued to advance until at the foot of the hill, when it turned, and made into the woods, having probably gorged itself with buffalo flesh. Mr. Crooks made all haste back to the camp, rejoicing at his escape, and determining never to stir out again without his rifle. A few days after this circumstance, a grizzly bear was shot in the neighborhood by Mr. Miller.[40]

While descending the Arkansas River on July 20, 1820, in present-day Fremont County, Colorado, Dr. Edwin James, the diarist of the Stephen H. Long expediton, recorded the attack of a grizzly bear on a member of the expedition. Dr. James elaborated on the physical prowess of the bear, quoting various sources including Lewis and Clark. He included several encounters with grizzlies which took place on the upper Missouri River and its tributaries. [21]

The Indians of the Missouri sometimes go to war in small parties against the grizzly bear, and trophies obtained from his body are highly esteemed, and dignify the fortunate individual who obtains them. We saw, on the necks of many of their warriors, necklaces, composed of the long fore-claws separated from the foot, tastefully arranged in a radiating manner; and one of the band of Pawnee warriors, that encountered a detachment of our party near the Kanza village, was ornamented with the entire skin of the fore-foot, with the claws remaining upon it, suspended on his breast. . . . From the concurrent testimony of those who have seen the animal in its native country, and who have had an opportunity of observing its manners, it is, without doubt, the most



William Wolfskill

daring and truly formidable animal that exists in the United States. He frequently pursues and attacks hunters; and no animal, whose swiftness or art is not superior to his own, can evade him. He kills the bison, and drags the ponderous carcass to a distance to devour at his leisure, as the calls of hunger may influence him.

The grizzly bear is not exclusively carnivorous, as has by some persons been imagined; but also, and perhaps in a still greater degree, derives nourishment from vegetables, both fruits and roots; the latter he digs up by means of his long fore-claws. . . .

Mr. J. Dougherty has had several narrow escapes from the grizzly bear. He was once hunting with a companion on one of the upper tributaries to the Missouri: he heard the report of his companion's rifle; and looking round, he beheld him at a little distance, endeavouring to escape from one of these bears, which he had wounded as it was advancing on him. Mr. D., attentive only to the preservation of his friend, immediately hastened to divert the attention and pursuit of the bear to himself, and arrived within rifle-shot distance just in time to effect his generous object. He lodged his ball in the animal, and was obliged to fly in his turn; whilst his friend, relieved from imminent danger, prepared for another onset, by charging his piece, with which he again wounded the bear, and relieved Mr. D. from pursuit. In this most hazardous encounter neither of them were injured, and the bear was fortunately destroyed.

George Yount

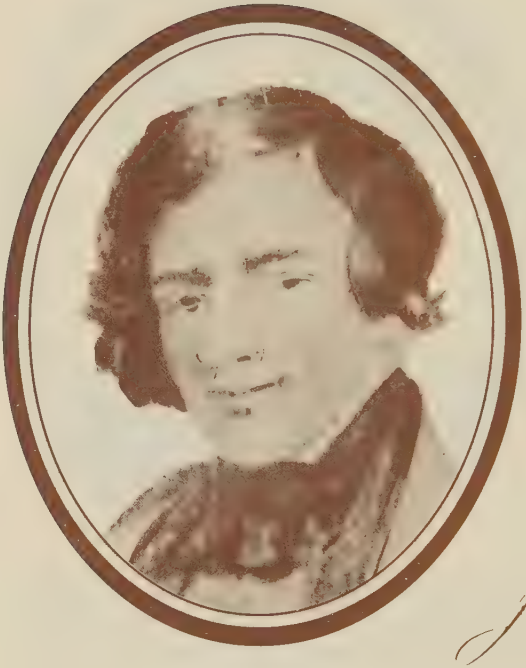
Several hunters were pursued by a grizzly bear that gained rapidly upon them. A boy belonging to the party, who possessed less speed than his companions, seeing the bear at his heels, fell with his face to the soil; the bear reared up on his hind-feet over the boy, looked down for a moment upon him, then bounded over him in pursuit of the fugitives.

A hunter, just returned from a solitary excursion to the Qui Court river, informed me at Engineer cantonment, that going one morning to examine his traps, he was pursued by a bear, and had merely time to get into a small tree, when the bear passed beneath him; and without halting, or even looking up, passed on at the same pace.

Another hunter received a blow from the fore-paw of one of these animals, which carried away his eye and cheek-bone.

In proof of the great muscular power with which this animal is endowed, a circumstance related to us by Mr. J. Dougherty may be stated. He shot down a bison; and leaving the carcass to obtain assistance to butcher it, he was surprised on his return to find that it had been dragged entire, to a considerable distance, by one of these bears, and was now lodged in a concavity of the earth, which the animal had scooped out for its reception.

Nowithstanding the formidable character of this bear, we have not made use of any precautions against their attacks; and although they have been several times prowling about us in the night, they have not evinced any disposition to attack us at that season.[41]



Jedediah Smith

Jedediah S. Smith

Andrew Sublette

A.H. Sublette

MOUNTAIN MEN

With the return of Lewis and Clark to St. Louis in 1806, the bustling little river community was destined to become the center of the upper Missouri River and Rocky Mountain fur trade for the next four decades. The captains' glowing report of a lucrative beaver trade among the upper Missouri River tribes quickly caught the attention of the city's fathers. This set in motion during the next few years a chain of events that would have a profound impact, not only on several St. Louis merchants, but also on a large Indian population, including Arikara, Assiniboine, Mandan, Gros Ventre, Crow, and Blackfoot.

The spring of 1807 saw several trading expeditions leave St. Louis with the dream of securing trade relations with the river tribes, agreements that would bring instant wealth and prosperity. One such expedition was headed by a wealthy St. Louis merchant, Manuel Lisa. Events of that spring would take Lisa into Crow country to the mouth of the Bighorn River, where he established Fort Raymond (Fort Manuel Lisa, Fort Manuel, Fort Lisa).

During the winter and spring of 1807–08 while his men remained in the Yellowstone River country trading with the Crow, Lisa contrived plans to make contact with the Blackfoot in the vicinity of the Three Forks of the Missouri. Thus, before Lisa returned to St. Louis in the summer of 1808 he gave orders which would send representatives to find the Blackfoot and secure permission to enter their country and establish trade agreements he hoped to captivate on the following year.

When Lisa arrived at St. Louis in the late summer of 1808 his experience of the preceding year had convinced him that a company with several investors was necessary if a productive business was to be carried out among Indians. Thus, during the winter of 1808–09 the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was organized in St. Louis. Manuel Lisa was only one of several owners but was recognized as the most powerful force within the company's operations.

In the spring of 1809 Lisa left St. Louis convcying $24,000's worth of trade goods and a determination to open trade relations with the Blackfoot. Unfortunately, he was not aware his men had failed the previous year to make any inroads with the Blackfoot. Providentially, one member of Lisa's 1809 crew was Thomas James, who kept a remarkable record of his experiences during the next two years, which provides the information

for the events of that fateful spring of 1810. Upon Lisa's arrival at the Assiniboine villages he sent the larger portion of his men and supplies to Fort Raymond to prepare for a spring expedition to the Three Forks. This group of men included such notables as John Colter, George Drouillard, Andrew Henry, Pierre Menard, Thomas James, and many others.

Lisa's dream of a Blackfoot trade agreement ended that spring. The Blackfoot resented the presence of the Americans trapping their beaver streams and hated the building of a fort at the Three Forks and retaliated with the killing of several of Lisa's men. With some of their men dead and others missing, the trappers, fearful of being overpowered by the Blackfoot, were forced to remain in their Fort. Only hunger gave them enough courage to leave the security of their fortress. It was in this setting that Thomas James wrote the following entry in his journal: "We made frequent hunting excursions in small parties, in which nothing of consequence occurred. Many of us had narrow escapes from Indians and still narrower from the Grizzly and White Bears."

It is interesting to note that the large population of white bear caused Thomas James to make a definite distinction between the white and grizzly bear. Lewis and Clark had made the same observation during their expedition. Thus it was under these circumstances and conditions that Thomas James recorded the following confrontations between man and bear. [1]

No attack was made, however, nor did an enemy make his appearance afterwards, except in the shape of white, grey, brown and grizzly bears. Seeing nothing of our enemies, the Blackfoot, we soon became emboldened and ventured out of the Fort [Three Forks] to hunt and trap, to the distance of about six miles. In these short expeditions the men had frequent encounters with bears, which in this region are of enormous size, sometimes weighing 800 pounds each, and when wounded, are the most terribly ferocious and dangerous to the hunter of all other animals. The African Lion and Bengal Tiger are the only beasts of prey, that in ferocity and power, can be compared with the Grey or Grizzly Bear of the Rocky Mountains. These were the terrors of our men as much as were the Indians [Blackfoot], and they usually spoke of them both as equally terrible and equally to be avoided. The great strength of the Bear, his swiftness and utter insensibility to danger when wounded, render him as dangerous to the hunter as the Tiger or the Lion. The first shot is seldom fatal upon him, on account of the thickness of his skin and skull, and the great quantity of fat and flesh that envelope his heart, and make

an almost impenetrable shield in front. I will relate a few adventures with this North American king of beasts, and then proceed with my narrative.

Ware [William Weir], an American, was hunting on an island in the Madison river, a short distance from the Fort and came suddenly, in a buffalo path, upon a white or grey Bear. He fired at the monster, wounded him in the breast, and then ran for his life, with the Bear at his heels, and saved himself by plunging into the river. His pursuer laid himself down on the bank and in the last struggle of death, fell into the water, where he died. Ware drew him out, took off the skin and was cutting and hanging up the meat, when he heard the noise of another Bear in the thicket near by. He hastened to the Fort for assistance and a party, with me, went over to the island. When there, we separated in our search, and in beating about the bushes, I, with my dog, entered a narrow path, and had gone some distance, when I saw the dog ahead, suddenly bristle up, bark and walk lightly as if scenting danger. I called to the men to come up, and watched the dog. He soon found the bear guarding a dead elk, which he and his dead companion had killed and covered with leaves. As soon as he saw the dog he plunged at him, and came furiously towards me, driving the dog before him and snorting and raging like a mad bull. I leveled my gun and snapped, and then ran with the bear at my heels, and his hot breath upon me. I reached the river bank, and turned short up a path, in which I met my companions coming to my call. They, however, seeing me running, were panic stricken and took to their heels also, thus were we all in full retreat from bruin, who crossed the river and fled through the willows on the other side. We heard him crashing his way for many hundred yards. On another occasion, a party had wounded a bear which instantly gave chase and overtook a Shawnee Indian in the company named Luthecaw, who had stumbled over some brush, and fallen. He grasped the Indian by the double capeau and coat collar and stood over him, while we fired six shots into the bear, which fell dead upon the Indian, who cried out that the bear was crushing him to death, but arose unhurt, as soon as we removed the tremendous weight of the dead monster from his body. His jaws were firmly closed upon the Shawnee's "capeau" and coat collar, who arose at last with "sacre moste, l'est crazy monte"--"damn the bear, he, almost mashed me." . . .[42]

The Grizzly Bears frequently made their appearance and we killed great numbers of them. A Yankee, named Pelton [Archibald], was remarkable for his contracted, narrow eyes, which resembled those of a bear. He was a jovial, popular fellow, and had greatly amused the company in coming up the river, by his songs and sermons. At every stopping place he held a meeting for the mock trial of offenders and exhorted us in the New England style to mend our courses and eschew sin. He had an adventure with a bear, about this time, which is worth relating. While trapping near the Fort with a small party, including myself, he was watching his traps alone, a short distance from us, when he heard a rustling in the bushes at his right, and before turning around he was attacked by a large bear, which grasped him by the breast, bore him to the earth and stood over him with his head back and eyes fixed on his face as if observing his features; Pelton screamed and yelled in a most unearthly manner, and his new acquaintance, as if frightened by his appearance and voice, leaped from over his body, stood and looked at him a moment over his shoulder, growled and then walked off. We ran in the directions of the cries and soon met Pelton coming towards us in a walk, grumbling and cursing, with his head down, as if he had been disturbed in a comfortable sleep, and altogether wearing an air of great dissatisfaction. He told us the story, and thought he owed his escape to his bearish eyes which disconcerted his friendly relations in the act of making a dinner of him. . . .[43]

Soon after this time, Marie and St. John [St. Jean], my two Canadian companions on the route from my winter quarters on the Missouri to the Big Horn, came to the Fort at the Forks. Marie's right eye was out and he carried the yet fresh marks of a horrible wound on his head and under his jaw. After I had left them at the Big Horn to come to the Forks, they came on to the Twenty-five Yard river, the most western branch of the Yellow Stone, for the purpose of trapping. One morning after setting his traps, Marie strolled out into the prairie for game, and soon perceived a large White Bear rolling on the ground in the shade of a tree. Marie fired at and missed him. The bear snuffed around him without rising, and did not see the hunter until he had reloaded, fired again and wounded him. His majesty instantly, with ears set back, flew towards his

enemy like an arrow, who ran for his life, reached a beaver dam across the river, and seeing no escape by land, plunged into the water above the dam. The Bear followed and soon proved himself as much superior to his adversary in swimming as in running. Marie dove and swam under the water as long as he could, when he rose to the surface near the Bear. He saved himself by diving and swimming in this manner several times, but his enemy followed close upon him and watched his motions with the sagacity which distinguishes these animals. At last he came up from under the water, directly beneath the jaws of the monster, which seized him by the head, the tushes piercing the scalp and neck under the right jaw and crushing the ball of his right eye. In this situation with his head in the Bear's mouth and he swimming with him ashore, St. John having heard his two shots in quick succession, came running to his rescue. St. John levelled his rifle and shot the Bear in the head, and then dragged out Marie from the water more dead than alive. I saw him six days afterwards, with a swelling on his head an inch thick, and his food and drink gushed through the opening under his jaw, made by the teeth of his terrible enemy.[44]

Jacob Fowler left Fort Smith (Arkansas) on September 6, 1821, with a trapping expedition up the Arkansas River en route to the Rocky Mountains. Hugh Glenn was in charge of the twenty-five man party, with Fowler acting as both second in command and diarist. On September 25, the party reached a trading post owned by Glenn at the mouth of the Verdigris River in present-day eastern Oklahoma. For reasons not mentioned by Fowler, five of the men returned to Fort Smith at this time, leaving only twenty in the party. On November 13, at the mouth of Purgatory Creek near present-day Las Animas, Bent County, Colorado, Fowler related the following account concerning Lewis Dawson's encounter with a white bear and Dawson's eventual death on November 16. [2]

Went to the Highest of the mounds near our Camp and took the bareing of the Soposed mountain Which Stud at north 80 West all So of the River Which is West We then proceded on 2 1/2 miles to a Small Crick Crosed it and asended a gradual Rise for about three miles to the Highest ground in the nibourhood--Wheare We Head a full vew of the mountains this must be the place Whare Pike first discovered the mountains Heare I took the bareing of two that Ware the Highest the longest South 71 W--the other Which appeered like a point South 75 West--nither

of those are the mountain Seen this morning--on looking forward We Seen a Branch Puting in from the South Side Which We Sopose to be Pikes first forke and make for it--Crossed and Camped in a grove of Bushes and timber about two miles up it from the River We maid Eleven miles West this day--We Stoped Heare about one oclock and Sent back for one Hors that Was not able to keep up--We Heare found some grapes among the brush--While Some Ware Hunting and others Cooking Some Picking grapes a gun Was fyered off and the Cry of a White Bare Was Raised We Ware all armed in an Instent and Each man Run His own Cors to look for the desperet anemel--the Brush in Which We Camped Contained from 10 to 20 acors Into Which the Bare Head [bear had] Run for Shelter find[ing] Him Self Surrounded on all Sides--threw this Conl glann With four others atemted to Run But the Bare being In their Way and lay Close in the brush undiscovered till the Ware With in a few feet of it--When it Sprung up and Caught Lewis doson and Pulled Him down In an Instent Conl glanns gun mised fyer or He Wold Have Releved the man But a large Slut Which belongs to the Party atacted the Bare With such fury that it left the man and persued Her a few steps in Which time the man got up and Run a few steps but Was overtaken by the bare When the Conl maid a second atempt to shoot but His [gun] mised fyer again and the Slut as before Releved the man Who Run as before--but Was Son again in the grasp of the Bare Who Semed Intent on His distruction--the Conl again Run Close up and as before His gun Wold not go off the Slut Makeing an other atack and Releveing the man--the Conl now be Came alarmed lest the Bare Wold pusue Him and Run up Stoopping tree--and after Him the Wounded man and Was followed by the Bare and thus the Ware all three up one tree--but a tree standing in Rich [reach] the Conl steped on that and let the man and Bare pas till the Bare Caught Him [Dawson] by one leg and drew Him back wards down the tree. While this Was doing the Conl Sharpened His flint Primed His gun and Shot the Bare down While pulling the man by the leg be fore any of the party arived to Releve Him--but the Bare Soon Rose again but Was Shot by several other [men] Wo Head [who had] got up to the place of action--it Is to be Remarked that the other three men With Him Run off--and the Brush Was so thick that those on the out Side Ware Som time geting threw--

I was my Self down the Crick below the brush and Heard the dredfull Screems of man in the Clutches of the Bare--the yelping of the Slut and the Hollowing of the men to Run in Run in the man Will be killed and noing the distance So grate that I Cold not get there in time to Save

THE MOUNTAIN MEN, 1810–1842

Idaho, Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming

James Clyman

the man So that it is much Easeer to Emagen my feellings than discribe them but before I got to the place of action the Bare Was killed and [I] met the Wounded man with Robert Fowler and one or two more asisting Him to Camp Where His Wounds Ware Examined--it appeers His Head Was In the Bares mouth at least twice--and that When the monster give the Crush that Was to mash the mans Head it being two large for the Span of His mouth the Head Sliped out only the teeth Cutting the Skin to the bone Where Ever the tuched it--so that the Skin of the Head Was Cut from about the Ears to the top in Several derections--all of Which Wounds Ware Sewed up as Well as Cold be don by men In our Situation Haveing no Surgen nor Surgical Instruments--the man Still Retained His under Standing but Said I am killed that I Heard my Skull Brake--but We Ware Willing to beleve He Was mistaken--as He Spoke Chearfully on the Subgect till In the after noon of the second day When He began to be Restless and Some What delereous--and on examening a Hole in the upper part of His Wright temple Which We beleved only Skin deep We found the Brains Workeing out--We then Soposed that He did Heare His Scull Brake He lived till a little before day on the third day after being Wounded--all Which time We lay at Camp and Buried Him as Well as our meens Wold admit Emedetely after the fattal axcident and Haveing done all We Cold for the Wounded man We turned our atention

[to] the Bare and found Him a large fatt anemel We Skined Him but found the Smell of a polcat so Strong that We Cold not Eat the meat--on examening His mouth We found that three of His teeth Ware broken off near the gums Which We Sopose Was the Cause of His not killing the man at the first Bite--and the one not Broke to be the caus of the Hole in the Right [temple] Which killed the man at last--the Hunters killed two deer Cased the Skins for Baggs We dryed out the Bares oil and Caryed it with us the Skin Was all so taken Care of--[45]

The next four accounts deal with the Hugh Glass story, which for many years was considered by several scholars to be fictitious. However, new materials provide ample evidence that the legendary event did indeed take place, even though these documents do not answer the many questions that surround the incident.

Glass accompanied William Ashley up the Missouri River in the spring of 1823 and was listed by Ashley as one of the men wounded in a skirmish with the Arikara Indians in present-day South Dakota. The majority of the Ashley men, including Glass, spent a good portion of the summer assisting a military expedition sent to punish the Arikaras. At the close of the campaign around September 1, Andrew Henry, Ashley's partner, set out from Fort Kiowa for the Yellowstone River with a group of men; Glass was among them. While the party was ascending the Grand River in present-day South Dakota, the controversial incident took place.

James Clyman, who had participated in the summer campaign, was not with Henry's company when Glass was attacked, but he was traveling with Jedediah Smith's party, which had been sent overland by Ashley to the land of the Crow Indians. Clyman knew Glass, but his account was given to him by some unknown source.

The Daniel Potts statement was taken from a letter written to Thomas Cochlen from the Rocky Mountains dated July 7, 1824. Potts had accompanied Andrew Henry up the Missouri River in 1822 and had spent the winter of 1822–23 in the mountains. His letter describes some of the events of 1823, including the white bear incident. Potts's letter is one of the major documents supporting the authenticity of the Hugh Glass story. George Yount claims to have met Glass in the Taos area a few years after Glass's horrible ordeal. Yount states that his account is based upon Glass's own description of the event. While in the Southwest, Yount also made the acquaintance of Lewis Dutton, who was a good friend of Glass. Yount suggests that Dutton gave him

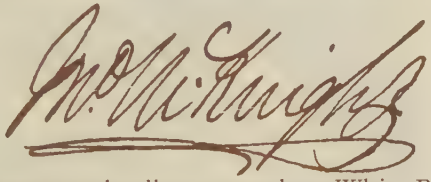
the Bare Caught Him by one leg and drew Him back wards down the tree

additional information that Dutton claimed to have received personally from Glass concerning the bear encounter. Also, Yount was a good friend of Hiram Allen, one of the two hunters that Andrew Henry sent out in front of the company that fateful day. The amount of information Allen gave Yount concerning the event is not known.

The account of Alfred Jacob Miller, who was present at the 1837 rendezvous, is valuable to support the theory that the story was told for many years among the mountain men. [3–6]

amongst this party was a Mr Hugh Glass who could not be rstrand and kept under Subordination he went off of the line of march one afternoon and met with a large grissly Bear which he shot at and wounded the bear as is usual attacted Glass he attemptd to climb a tree but the bear caught him and hauled to the ground tearing and lacerating his body in feareful rate by this time several men ware in close gun shot but could not shoot for fear of hitting Glass at length the beare appea[r]ed to be satisfied and turned to leave when 2 or 3 men fired the bear turned immediately on glass and give him a second mutilation

on turning again several more men shot him when for the third time he pounced on Glass and fell dead over his body this I have from information not being present here I leave Glass for the presen[46]



one man was allso tore nearly all to peases by a White Bear and was left by the way without any gun who afterwards recover'd;[47]

As Maj. Henry pressed onward towards the Yellowstone, constrained to use great caution, he had struck a tributary of the Missouri & was following its channel, where the Buffalo & the Buffaloberries were found abundant & proved convenient for food--But the band must keep together, as they were liable, at any moment, to be assailed, by the Pickarees in ambush--He accordingly selected two distinguished hunters, one of which was Allen of Mohave notoriety, & a bosom friend of Yount's

by this time several men ware in close gun shot but could not shoot for fear of hitting Glass at length the beare appea[r]ed to be satisfied and turned to leave when 2 or 3 men fired the bear turned immediately on glass and give him a second mutilation

to precede the party, from a half a mile to a mile, in order to kill meat for food--

Glass, as was usual, could not be kept, in obedience to orders, with the band but persevered to thread his way alone through the bushes & chapparel--As the two hunters were wending their way, up the River, Allen discovered Glass dodging along in the forest alone; & said to his companion, "there look at that fellow, Glass; see him foolishly exposing his life--I wish some Grizzly Bear would pounce upon him & teach him a lesson of obedience to orders, & to keep in his place--He is ever off, scouting in the bushes & exposing his life & himself to dangers--Glass disappeared in the chapperel & within half an hour his screams were heard--The two hunters hastened to his relief & discovered a huge Grizy Bear, with two Cubs--The monster had seized him, torn the flesh from the lower part of the body & from the lower limbs--He also had his neck shockingly torn, even to the degree that an aperture appeared to have been made into the windpipe, & his breath to exude at the side of his neck--It is not probable however that any aperture was made into the windpipe--Blood flowed freely, but fortunately no bone was broken--& his hands & arms were not disabled--

The whole party were soon there, the monster & her cubs were slain, & the victim cared for in the best degree possible, under existing circumstances--A convenient hand litter was prepared & the sufferer carried by his humane fellow-trappers from day to day--He retained all his faculties but those of speech & locomotion--Too feeble to walk, or help himself at all, his comrads every moment waited his death--Day by day they ministered to his wants, & no one counted it any hardship--

After having thus carried Glass six (several) days, it became necessary for the party to croud their journey, as the season for trapping was fast transpiring--Maj. Henry therefore offered four hundred Dolls to any two of his men, who would volunteer to remain until he should die, decently bury him & then press on their way to overtake the main body--One man & a boy volunteered to remain--They did so, & the party urged forward towards the Yellow Stone--[48]

The greatest narratives at the camp fire are in connection with this animal. One of the most singular was that of a man named Glass. He with some companions on foot shot at a bear but only wounded him and now a chase commenced. He called to the others to run and indoing so himself, tripped and fell. By the time he rose and looked round the beast confronted him. As he closed on him G-----, never losing his presence of mind, discharged his pistol full into the body of the animal, at the same moment that the other fixed his claws deep into his flesh and rolled him on the ground.

By the time his companions reached the spot he was covered with blood and the bear dead lying upon his body. Both appeared dead. The others pulled the bear from him, took his arms and returned to camp. After many days the company was returning to the fort. They saw a solitary man slowly approaching by the banks of the river. As he came nearer their eyes rested on a cadaverous figure with a head so disfigured as to be unknown. The astonishment of the party may be conceived when they heard a well known voice call out "Hallo, Bill, you thought I was gone under, didn't you? Hand over my horse and fixens. I ain't dead yet by a cussed sight." It was the veritable Glass whom they had left with the bear. As soon as he could gain strength sufficient he took a supply of meat with him and on it and berries subsisted until he reached the fort.[49]

It was late September, 1823, when Jedediah Smith left Fort Kiowa. William Ashley sent Smith and his small party of men to find the Crow Indians to winter with them. The Ashley-Henry Fur Company was financially troubled, and Smith's expedition to find the Crow and establish trade with them was critical. By October the expedition was in the vicinity of the Black Hills (South Dakota). While the exact location of Smith's encounter with the grizzly is not known, Charles L. Camp feels that the expedition traveled south following the South Fork of the Cheyenne River. Dale L. Morgan, Smith's biographer, suggests that "Smith wore his hair long from that time on in his life to cover up the missing eyebrow and scar torn ear." [7]

while passing through a Brushy bottom a large Grssely came down the vally we being in single file men on foot leding pack horses he struck us about the center then turning ran paralel to our line Capt. Smith being in the advanc he ran to the open ground and as he immerged from

while passing through a Brushy bottom a large Grssely came down the vally we being in single file men on foot leding pack horses

the thicket he and the bear met face to face Grissly did not hesitate a moment but sprung on the capt taking him by the head first pitc[h]ing sprawling on the earth he gave him a grab by the middle fortunately cat[c]hing by the ball pouch and Butcher k[n]ife which he broke but breaking several of his ribs and cutting his head badly none of us having any sugical Knowledge what was to be done one Said come take hold and he wuld say why not you so it went around I asked the Capt what was best he said one or 2 [go] for water and if you have a needle and thread git it out and sew up my wounds around my head which was bleeding freely I got a pair of scissors and cut off his hair and then began my first Job of d[r]essing wounds upon examination I [found] the bear had taken nearly all his head in his capcious mouth close to his left eye on one side and clos to his right ear on the other and laid the skull bare to near the crown of the head leaving a white streak whare his teeth passed one of his ears was torn fom his head out to the outer rim after stitching all the other wounds in the best way I was capabl and according to the captains directions the ear being the last I told him I could do nothing for his Eare O you must try to stich up some way or other said he then I put in my needle stiching it through and through and over and over laying the lacerated parts togather as nice as I could with my hands water was found in about ame mille when we all moved down and encamped the captain being able to mount his horse and ride to camp whare we pitched a tent the onley one we had and made him as comfortable as circumtances would permit this gave us a lisson on the charcter of the grissly Baare which we did not forget[50]

On June 20, 1824, James Ohio Pattie left Newport, Missouri, for Taos as a member of a 116-man trading and trapping expedition under the direction of Sylvestre Pratte. These men traveled up the Platte River to its fork, trading at different Pawnee Indian villages until August. They then concluded their business and started for Mexican territory, taking a southwesterly route across present-day eastern Colorado. On September 10, between the drainage basins of the Arkansas and Kansas rivers near the headwaters of the Smoky Hill River, Pattie had his first encounter with a white bear. During the early morning of September 12, while Pattie stood guard at the camp, a white bear attacked and killed one of the men. On September 13, Pattie records that he counted 220 white bears during the day and that the hunters killed eight of them. Twenty men were posted that night to prevent the bears from entering camp. Two tried and were killed. [8–9]

The succeeding morning we crossed the ridge, and came to water in the evening, where we encamped. Here we killed a white bear, which occupied several of us at least an hour. It was constantly in chase of one or another of us, thus withholding us from shooting at it, through fear of wounding each other. This was the first, I had ever seen. His claws were four inches long, and very sharp. He had killed a buffaloe bull, eaten a part of it, and buried the remainder. When we came upon him, he was watching the spot, where he had buried it, to keep off the wolves, which literally surrounded him.

On the 11th, we travelled over some hilly ground. In the course of the day, we killed three white bears, the claws of which I saved, they being of considerable value among the Indians, who wear them around the neck, as the distinguishing mark of a brave. Those Indians, who wear this ornament, view those, who do not, as their inferiors.[51]

Hugh Glass

I was one of the guard for the night, which was rather cloudy. About the middle of my guard, our horses became uneasy, and in a few moments more, a bear had gotten in among them, and sprung upon one of them. The others were so much alarmed, that they burst their fastenings, and darted off at full speed. Our camp was soon aroused, and in arms, for defence, although much confused, from not knowing what the enemy was, nor from what direction to expect the attack. Some, however, immediately set off in pursuit of our horses. I still stood at my post, in no little alarm, as I did not know with the rest, if the Indians were around us or not. All around was again stillness, the noise of those in pursuit of the horses being lost in the distance. Suddenly my attention was arrested, as I gazed in the direction, from which the alarm came, by a noise like that of a struggle at no great distance from me. I espied a hulk, at which I immediately fired. It was the bear devouring a horse, still alive. My shot wounded him. The report of my gun, together with the noise made by the enraged bear, brought our men from the camp, where they awaited a second attack from the unknown enemy in perfect stillness.--Determined to avenge themselves, they now sallied forth, although it was so dark, that an object ten steps in advance could not be seen. The growls of the bear, as he tore up the ground around him with his claws, attracted all in his direction.

George Nidever

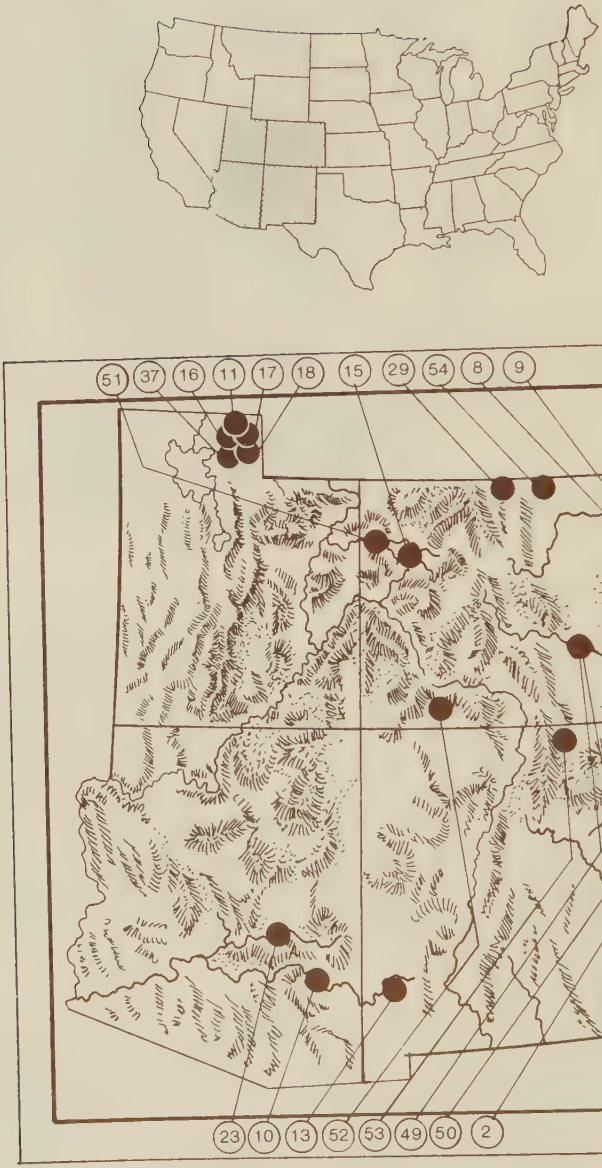
Some of the men came so near, that the animal saw them, and made towards them. They all fired at him, but did not touch him. All now fled from the furious animal, as he seemed intent on destroying them. In this general flight one of the men was caught. As he screamed out in his agony, I happening to have reloaded my gun, ran up to relieve him. Reaching the spot in an instant, I placed the muzzle of my gun against the bear, and discharging it, killed him. Our companion was literally torn in pieces. The flesh on his hip was torn off, leaving the sinews bare, by the teeth of the bear. His side was so wounded in three places, that his breath came through the openings; his head was dreadfully bruised, and his jaw broken. His breath came out from both sides of his windpipe, the animal in his fury having placed his teeth and claws in every part of his body. No one could have supposed, that there was the slightest possibility of his recovery, through any human means. We remained in our encampment three days, attending upon him, without seeing any change for the worse or better in his situation. He had desired us from the first to leave him, as he considered his case as hopeless as ourselves did. We then concluded to move from our encampment, leaving two men with him, to each of whom we gave one dollar a day, for remaining to take care of him, until he should die, and to bury him decently.

On the 14th we set off, taking, as we believed, a final leave of our poor companion. Our feelings may be imagined, as we left this suffering man to die in this savage region, unfriended and unpitied. We travelled but a few miles before we came to a fine stream and some timber. Concluding that this would be a better place for our unfortunate companion, than the one where he was, we encamped with the intention of sending back for him. We despatched men for him, and began to prepare a shelter for him, should he arrive. This is a fork of Smoke Hill river, which empties into the Platte. We set traps, and caught eight beavers, during the night. Our companions with the wounded man on a litter, reached us about eight o'clock at night.

In the morning we had our painful task of leave taking to go through again. We promised to wait for the two we left behind at the Arkansas river. We travelled all day up this stream.--I counted, in the course of the day, two hundred and twenty white bears. We killed eight, that made an attack upon us; the claws of which I saved. Leaving the stream in the evening we encamped on the plain. A guard of twenty was relieved through the night, to prevent the bears from coming in upon us. Two tried to do it and were killed.[52]

James O. Pattie and his companions arrived in Taos on October 26, 1824, and then in Santa Fe on November 5. After acquiring a license from local officials to trap in different parts of the country, the expedition was split into small trapping parties. Pattie's group consisted of seven men who left Santa Fe on November 22 to travel south down the Rio del Norte (Rio Grande). By mid-January, the party had turned west to trap the Helay (Gila River) in the vicinity of the New Mexico and Arizona border. During the evening of January 25, near present-day Safford, Arizona, a snowstorm threatened the trappers. They sought shelter in a cavern among several large rocks. [10]

Our horses became impatient under the pelting of the storm, broke their ropes, and disappeared. In the morning, the earth was covered with snow, four or five inches deep. One of our companions accompanied me to search for our horses. We soon came upon their trail, and followed it, until it crossed the river. We found it on the opposite side, and pursued it up a creek, that empties into the Helay on the north shore. We passed a cave at the foot of the cliffs. At its mouth I remarked, that the bushes were beaten down, as though some animal had been browsing

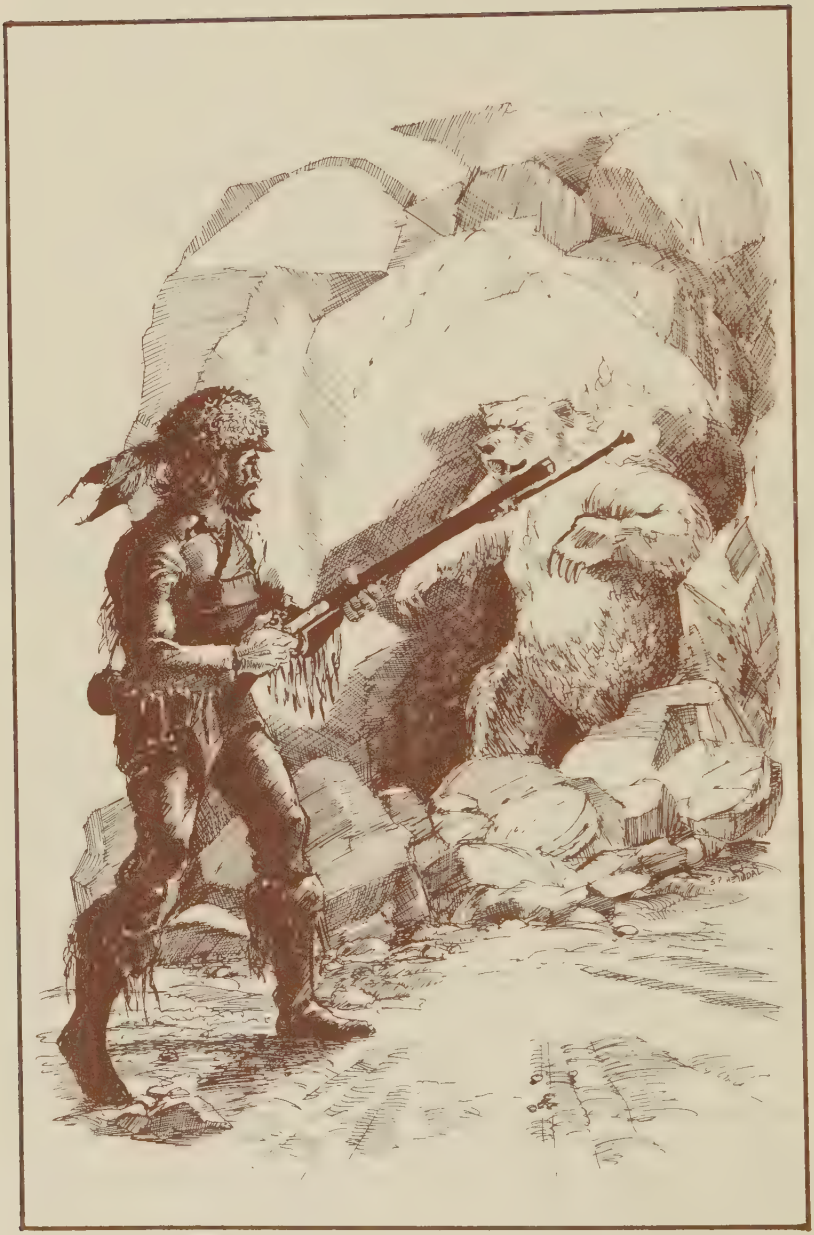


THE MOUNTAIN MEN, 1821–1858

Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico

upon them. I was aware, that a bear had entered the cave. We collected some pine knots, split them with our tomahawks, and kindled torches, with which I proposed to my companion, that we should enter the cave together, and shoot the bear. He gave me a decided refusal, notwithstanding I reminded him, that I had, more than once, stood by him in a similar adventure; and notwithstanding I made him sensible, that a bear in a den is by no means so formidable, as when ranging freely in the woods. Finding it impossible to prevail on him to accompany me, I lashed my torch to a stick, and placed it parallel with the gun barrel, so as that I could see the sights on it, and entered the cave. I advanced cautiously onward about twenty yards, seeing nothing. On a sudden the bear reared himself erect within seven feet of me, and began to growl, and gnash his teeth. I levelled my gun and shot him between the eyes, and began to retreat. Whatever light it may throw upon my courage, I admit, that I was in such a hurry, as to stumble, and extinguish my light. The growling and struggling of the bear did not at all contribute to allay my apprehensions. On the contrary, I was in such haste to get out of the dark place, thinking the bear just at my heels, that I fell several times on the rocks, by which I cut my limbs, and lost my gun. When I reached the light, my companion declared, and I can believe it, that I was as pale as a corpse. It was some time, before I could summon sufficient courage to re-enter the cavern for my gun. But having re-kindled my light, and borrowed my companion's gun, I entered the cavern again, advanced and listened. All was silent, and I advanced still further, and found my gun, near where I had shot the bear. Here again I paused and listened. I then advanced onward a few strides, where to my great joy I found the animal dead. I returned, and brought my companion in with me. We attempted to drag the carcass from the den, but so great was the size, that we found ourselves wholly unable. We went out, found our horses, and returned to camp for assistance. My father severely reprimanded me for venturing to attack such a dangerous animal in its den, when the failure to kill it outright by the first shot, would have been sure to be followed by my death.

Four of us were detached to the den. We were soon enabled to drag the bear to the light, and by the aid of our beast to take it to camp. It was both the largest and whitest bear I ever saw. The best proof, I can give, of the size and fatness is, that we extracted ten gallons of oil from it. The meat we dried, and put the oil in a trough, which we secured in a deep crevice of a cliff, beyond the reach of animals of prey. We were sensible that it would prove a treasure to us on our return.[53]



On a sudden the bear reared himself erect within seven feet of me, and began to growl, and gnash his teeth

William Kittson left Flathead Lake (Montana) on December 20, 1824, as a member of Peter Skene Ogden's Snake River brigade. By April 20, they were trapping successfully along the Portneuf River in southeastern Idaho. Six days later, they arrived and camped on the Bear River near present-day Grace, Idaho. Kittson recorded that the Bear River had been named by Michael Bourdon because of the great number of grizzlies in the vicinity. On May 3, the expedition was camped on Cub Creek, a tributary of the Bear River in northern Utah near the Utah–Idaho border. While camped at this location, they were visited by Shoshone Indians who told Ogden that some Americans had wintered on the same stream and had acquired a very large number of furs which they had cached in the mountains. The next day Kittson recorded a close encounter which one of the men had experienced while checking his traps. One week later on May 11, while camped on the Little Bear River, approximately six miles from its junction with the Bear, Ogden noted the large population of grizzly bears in the area. [11]

Wednesday 4th. Last night we received 13 Beaver from the Traps. On account of bad weather this day we did not raised camp. Depot had a narrow escape from a Grizzly Bear, attacking him while setting his traps, he saved his life by diving into the river. We had rain, snow and hail during the day. 7 Beaver from the Traps.[54]

Wednesday 11th.--. . . Buffalo scarce but grizzily Bears in in abundance one of the men had a narrow escape three of them were killed.[55]

The first rendezvous to be held by the mountain men took place on July 1, 1825, at Henry's Fork of the Green River. It lasted one day. On July 2, William Ashley left for St. Louis with his horse and mule caravan laden with 100 packs of furs representing the fall and spring hunts. Ashley crossed South Pass en route to the Bighorn River, where he constructed bullboats and floated his furs down the Bighorn and Yellowstone rivers. James Beckwourth, who dictated the incident given below, was one of the men who accompanied Ashley with the furs downriver. Ashley had prearranged to meet a military expedition under the

Depot had a narrow escape from a Grizzly Bear, attacking him while setting his traps, he saved his life by diving into the river

command of General Henry Atkinson at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, where his furs would be transported by government boats down the Missouri River to St. Louis. The combined parties stopped at Fort Lookout, located near the junction of the Missouri and White rivers in South Dakota. While visiting the fort, Ashley was presented a live grizzly from Major Joshua Pilcher, who was in command of the American Fur Company trading post located nearby. During the winter 1854–55, Beckwourth dictated his autobiography to T. D. Bonner of San Francisco. Since Beckwourth did not keep a journal, many of the dates and places pertaining to events in his life are missing. Such is the case concerning his recollections of the grizzly encounters involving two mountain men by the name of Coe and Keyere. [12]

The loss of the boat being supplied, and all to rights again, we continued our course down the Missouri, still in company with the troops, until we reached Fort Look-out, where we encamped for the night. There was a trading-post at this fort, belonging to the American Fur Company, in charge of Major Pitcher. The major made General Ashley present of a large grizzly bear for a plaything, and a pretty plaything we found him before we were done with him. He was made fast with a chain to the cargo-box on deck, and seemed to think himself captain; at any rate, he was more imperious in his orders than a commodore on a foreign station. He would suffer no one on deck, and seemed literally to apply the poet's words to himself,

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute."

We continued our course down the river, encamping on shore every night . . .

When we came in sight of the city we were saluted by a piece of artillery, which continued its discharges until we landed at the market-place. . . .

Our cargo was soon landed and stored, the men receiving infomation that they would be paid off that afternoon at the store of Messrs. Warndorf and Tracy. We accordingly repaired thither in a body to receive our pay. . . .

I forgot to mention the disembarkation of Grizzly at the proper time, but will do so here. After the peltry was all landed and stored, the bear still occupied his station. Hundreds were yet gazing at him, many of whom had never seen one of the kind before. The general said to me, "James, how, under the sun, are we to get that animal off the boat?"

Dick Wootton

I, having a few glasses of "artificial courage" to back me, felt exceedingly valorous, and thought myself able to throw a mill-stone across the Mississippi. Accordingly, I volunteered to bring him ashore. I procured a light stick, walked straight up to the bear and, speaking very sharp to him (as he had to us all the way down the river), deliberately unfastened his chain. He looked me in the eyes for a moment, and, giving a low whine, drooped his head. I led him off the boat along a staging prepared for the purpose, the crowd instantly falling back to a respectful distance. Landing him without accident, the general wished me to lead him to the residence of Major Biddle, distant a quarter of a mile from the landing. Courageous as ever, I led him on, though some of the time he would lead his leader, Bruin often looking round at the crowd that was following up at a prudent distance behind. I arrived safe at the residence, and made Grizzly fast to an apple-tree that stood there. I had scarcely got to the length of his chain, when he made a furious spring at me; the chain, very fortunately, was a strong one, and held him fast.

I then called at the major's house, and, delivering our general's compliments to him, informed him he had sent a pet for his acceptance. He inquired what kind of a pet, and, taking him to the tree where I had made fast the bear, I showed the huge beast to him. The major almost quaked with fear. While we stood looking at him, a small pig happened to pass near the bear, when Grizzly dealt him such a blow with his paw

that he left him not a whole bone in his body, and piggy fell dead out of the bear's reach.[56]

On one occasion, while I was with the Crow Indians, there was a man of the name of Coe who was trapping in one of the neighboring streams, and I became alarmed for his safety, as Black Foot parties were skulking about in all directions, and were sure to kill him if they should find his camp. I found Coe, and told him my fears. He instantly gathered up his traps, and, mounting his horse, started toward me. When within fair gunshot, an old bear sprang from a thicket, and landed upon the flanks of his horse, applying his teeth to the roots of the poor animal's tail, and holding him as if in a vise. Coe leaned over his horse's neck, and cried out,

"Shoot, Jim! shoot quick!"

I could not help laughing to have saved my life, as he turned from side to side, though his situation was a critical one. I soon got in a favorable position, and put a ball in the animal's head, just behind the ear, when he liberated the horse and his rider, falling on his back apparently stone dead.[57]

George Drouillard

There is a story, remembered by the mountaineers, of a person named Keyere. He was a man who never exceeded one hundred pounds in weight, but was clear grit, what little there was of him. He went out one day alone, and his horse came back in the evening without his rider, and we thought that the Indians had made sure of poor Keyere's scalp. The next morning a small party of us started on the horse's trail, and found Keyere lying beside a large dead grizzly bear. Keyere was horribly mutilated and insensible, but still alive, and must have soon died if no one had come to his rescue.

We took him to camp, and nursed him with all possible care. When he recovered sufficiently to tell his tale, his story was received with shouts of laughter, and was rehearsed as a wonderful joke from camp to camp. Keyere stated that, when he saw the grizzly, he got from his horse

to shoot him, but unfortunately only wounded the animal. The bear (so Keyere says) caught hold of him, and commenced a regular rough-and-tumble fight; finally Keyere got a good lick at the bear's head, knocked him down with his fist, and then attempted to run away. The bear, however, was too quick, when Keyere, becoming desperate, seized the beast by the tongue, drew his knife, and stabbed the creature to the heart!

Improbable as is the tale, it was a singular fact, that, when Keyere was found, his knife was up to the maker's name in the bear's side, and the body showed the effects of other severe stabs; but whether a man weighing ninety pounds could knock down the best of boxers, weighing twelve hundred, the reader can decide; but Keyere ever told the same tale, and became known far and near as the man that whipped the grizzly in a stand-up fight. Probably no man ever recovered who received so many wounds as did Keyere in this unequal combat.[58]

James Ohio Pattie spent most of 1826 traveling throughout northern Mexico. By October of that year, he was in the vicinity of Passo del Norte and was headed for his father's mines, located on the Mimbres River near present-day Silver City, New Mexico. On October 28, he set out from El Paso and traveled north along the Rio del Norte (Rio Grande). He records that soon after leaving the city, he began to see "grey bears" *and that one attacked his horse. He shot the bear through the head and dined on* "the choice parts of his flesh." *Pattie arrived at the mines on November 11 and remained with his father until December 1. During this period, he took several hunting trips which brought him in contact with his old friend, the grizzly.* [13]

In a hunting excursion with a companion who was an American, he one morning saw fit to start out of bed, and commence his hunt while I was yet asleep in bed. He had scarcely advanced a league, before he killed a deer on the top of a high ridge. He was so inadvertent, as to commence skinning the animal, before he had re-loaded his rifle. Thus engaged, he did not perceive a bear with her cubs, which had advanced within a few feet of him. As soon as he saw his approaching companion, without coveting any farther acquaintance, he left deer and rifle, and ran for his life. He stopped not, until he arrived at the mines. The bear fell to work for a meal upon the deer, and did not pursue him. We immediately started back to have the sport of hunting this animal. As we approached the ridge, where he had killed the deer, we discovered the bear descending

Ramsay Crooks

Ramsay Crooks

the ridge towards us. We each of us chose a position, and his was behind a tree, which he could mount, in case he wounded, without killing her. This most ferocious and terrible animal, the grizzly or grey bear, does not climb at all. I chose my place opposite him, behind a large rock, which happened to be near a precipice, that I had not observed. Our agreement was to wait until she came within 30 yards, and then he was to give her the first fire. He fired, but the powder being damp, his gun made long fire, whence it happened that he shot her too low, the ball passing through the belly, and not a mortal part. She made at him in terrible rage. He sprang up his tree, the bear close at his heels. She commenced biting and scratching the tree, making, as a Kentuckian would phrase it, the lint fly. But finding that she could not bit the tree down, and being in an agony of pain, she turned the course of her attack, and came growling and tearing up the bushes before her, towards me. My companion bade me lie still, and my own purpose was to wait until I could get a close fire. So I waited until the horrible animal was within six feet of me. I took true aim at her head. My gun flashed in the pan. She gave one growl and sprang at me with her mouth open. At two strides I leapt down the unperceived precipice. My jaw bone was split on a sharp rock, on which my chin struck at the bottom. Here I lay senseless. When I regained recollection, I found my companion had bled me with the point of his butcher knife, and was sitting beside me with his hat full of water,

bathing my head and face. It was perhaps an hour, before I gained full recollection, so as to be able to walk. My companion had cut a considerable orifice in my arm with his knife, which I deemed rather supererogation; for I judged, that I had bled sufficiently at the chin.

When I had come entirely to myself, my companion proposed that we should finish the campaign with the bear. I, for my part, was satisfied with what had already been done, and proposed to retreat. He was importunate, however, and I consented. We ascended the ridge to where he had seen the bear lie down in the bushes. We fixed our guns so that we thought ourselves sure of their fire. We then climbed two trees, near where the bear was, and made a noise, that brought her out of her lair, and caused her to spring fiercely towards our trees. We fired together, and killed her dead. We then took after the cubs. They were three in number. My companion soon overtook them. They were the size of the largest rackoons. These imps of the devil turned upon him and made fight. I was in too much pain and weakness to assist him. They put him to all he could do to clear himself of them. He at length got away from them, leaving them masters of the field, and having acquired no more laurels than I, from my combat with the buffaloe calf. His legs were deeply bit and scratched, and what was worse, such was the character of the affair, he only got ridicule for his assault of the cubs. I was several weeks in recovering, during which time, I ate neither meat nor bread, being able to swallow nothing but liquids.

The country abounds with these fierce and terrible animals, to a degree, that in some districts they are truly formidable. They get into the corn fields. The owners hear the noise, which they make among the corn, and supposing it occasioned by cows and horses that have broken into the fields, they rise from their beds, and go to drive them out, when instead of finding retreating domestic animals, they are assailed by the grizzly bear. I have been acquainted with several fatal cases of that sort. One of them was a case, that intimately concerned me. Iago, my servant, went out with a man to get a load of wood. A bear came upon this man and killed him and his ass in the team. A slight flight of snow had fallen. Some Spaniards, who had witnessed the miserable fate of their companion, begged some of us to go and aid them in killing the bear. Four of us joined them. We trailed the bear to its den, which was a crevice in the bluff. We came to the mouth and fired a gun. The animal, confident in his fierceness, came out, and we instantly killed it. This occurred in New Mexico.[59]

Joe Meek, a greenhorn who was destined to become one of the most noted trappers of the central and northern Rockies, left St. Louis on March 17, 1829, with William Sublette's supply caravan en route to the rendezvous. With the conclusion of the summer activities in Pierre's Hole, the trappers moved to the headwaters of Henry's Fork of the Snake River and began their trapping. It was at this point in Meek's mountain career that he had his first experience in setting traps in the cold mountain streams to catch the elusive beaver. The party then continued moving north to the headwaters of the Gallatin River, where they prepared for the fall hunt. It was during this time period that Meek had his first encounter with a "red bear." [14]

It was sometime during the fall hunt in the Pine Woods, on the west side of the Rocky Mountains, that Meek had one of his earliest adventures with a bear. Two comrades, Craig and Nelson, and himself, while out trapping, left their horses, and traveled up a creek on foot, in search of beaver. They had not proceeded any great distance, before they came suddenly face to face with a red bear; so suddenly, indeed, that the men made a spring for the nearest trees. Craig and Meek ascended a large pine, which chanced to be nearest, and having many limbs, was easy to climb. Nelson happened to take to one of two small trees that grew close together; and the bear, fixing upon him for a victim, undertook to climb after him. With his back against one of these small trees, and his feet against the other, his bearship succeeded in reaching a point not far below Nelson's perch, when the trees opened with his weight, and down he went, with a shock that fairly shook the ground. But this bad luck only seemed to infuriate the beast, and up he went again, with the same result, each time almost reaching his enemy. With the second tumble he was not the least discouraged; but started up the third time, only to be dashed once more to the ground when he had attained a certain height. At the third fall, however, he became thoroughly disgusted with his want of success, and turned and ran at full speed into the woods.

"Then," says Meek, "Craig began to sing, and I began to laugh; but Nelson took to swearing. 'O yes, you can laugh and sing now,' says Nelson; 'but you war quiet enough when the bear was around.' 'Why Nelson,' I answered, 'you wouldn't have us noisy before that distinguished guest of yours?' But Nelson damned the wild beast; and Craig and I laughed, and said he didn't seem wild a bit. That's the way we hector each other in the mountains. If a man gets into trouble he is

With his back against one of these small trees, and his feet against the other, his bearship succeeded in reaching a point not far below Nelson's perch

only laughed at; 'let him keep out; let him have better luck,' is what we say."[60]

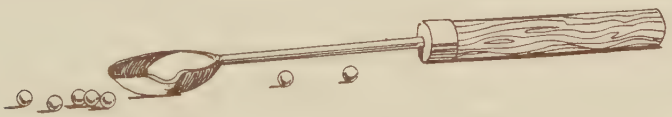
George Yount arrived in New Mexico in the summer of 1826, hoping to gain his fortune in the Santa Fe trade. That fall he joined a trapping expedition, led by Ewing Young, headed for the Gila and Colorado rivers. The trapping was successful, but the Mexican officials confiscated the furs when the party returned to Santa Fe in the spring of 1827. That same year, Yount led his own expedition to the Gila and made a small profit. In 1829, William Wolfskill and Yount formed a partnership which financed a trapping expedition, to be led by Yount, over the Old Spanish Trail into the Salt Lake area. The expedition of thirty men traveled north from Taos and trapped the Campayuta, Grand, Blue, and White rivers of Colorado. By fall, the party had pushed into present-day Utah, trapping around Utah Lake and establishing winter quarters in Cache Valley. Yount noted some grizzly bear encounters during the summer and winter of 1829–30 near the White River and Logan Hole (Cache Valley, Utah). [15–17]

At the time of our trappers' arrival the Buffalo and smaller animals had fled the country leaving only the Elk and the Grizzly Bear. The latter were in a state of almost utter starvation. They were not sufficiently fleet of foot to capture the Elk which was the only animal left for them to feed upon.--In consequence of extreme hunger they had become ferocious and it was dangerous to travel or trap upon the streams, as, as in seasons of drought, they congregate about the Rivers, for green grass, which could not be found upon the mountains where these animals always prefer to roam. In the lack of animal food and nuts the bear will subsist on grass rather than starve. Occasionally these monsters would find a wounded Elk, or the carcass of one shot by the hunter and fled into the thickets to die. Around this they would congregate, in great numbers, and quarrel and fight with ferocity very awful. To witness these quarrels, or to hear them in the night season, in the immediate neighborhood of the camp would cause the blood to curdle, or to course very coldly through the vein many a night our trappers multiplied and enlarged their fires (the animal is afraid of fire) and, with anxious minds, counted the slow, and tardy hours till morning. In all their long season of wild wanderings among beasts of prey and savages, they had encountered no period so awful as the few weeks spent on the two last named Rivers. At

length they devised a method for turning into sport and past time these terrific scenes of cruelty among those monsters of the Desert. Their method was as follows. They would march out in double plattoon eached armed with rifle and other weapons, and come to a halt at a convenient distance to protect one of their number, who would advance alone till with in easy rifle shot and open on the herd as they were biting and devouring one another and snarling and quarreling over portions of the carcass. He was sure to hit one, as his aim was cold and deliberate from feelings of perfect security and protection. This would attract more or less of the monsters, certainly the wounded one towards himself. It was not common that the first shot terminated the life of its victim. As the animal charged upon him, he would retreat and fall in the rear of his friends. So soon as the monsters approached to with in a convenient distance, the word fire was given, and the first rank would instantly obey. If they failed to prostrate all the advancing enemy, they fell into the rear to reload, and a volley from the second rank was almost sure to clear the field. Should a solitary enemy remain, alive, the individual who had enjoyed the honor of opening the action was by this time in readiness to commence the action anew. Thus acting in concert and systematically, they destroyed great numbers. Bruin found himself over matched. He was to tally unskilled in military tactics. He had been bred in the wilderness, and never learnt even the elements of a field or rifle drill. He was confounded to witness the comparative efficiency of science and strength. The word fire was to him quite unintelligible. And he was amazed to meet valley after valley in such rapid succession. His position was not unlike that of the savages who met in deadly combat a solitary trapper who chanced to be armed with a pair of six shooting revolvers. They were saluted with a pistol shot, and one of their numbers fell. Then they rushed upon him, and the second fell. They assumed to capture their victim then alive, in order to enjoy the pleasure of torturing him in retaliation for the death of their fellows. But they kept falling as one after another advanced, till some half dozen filled up before the mysterious strangers. The rest took fright, not waiting to look behind, leaving the white man master of the field. So poor Bruin. Our trappers, on some occasion, really felt their pity moved for the astonished animals. And one exclaimed, "I am ashamed. It is not fair play. It is really ignoble. I will go out no more. The poor animals have no chance for self defence. We were like boys shooting frogs. I advocate honor even towards a grizzly Bear." By this ingenious method our trappers destroyed a great number of these monsters of the forest, and were afforded no little amusement.

But they found the animals very lean and emaciated. They were in an absolutely starving condition. This amusement afforded to our trappers a very aggreable diversion in their monotonous round of toil and travel.[61]

One of the first nights of winter, when all were sleeping, the snow falling and the wind howling around them, a monster bear, of the grizzly species, came into camp, and stole from under the head of an aged Frenchman, his pillow bundle of furs. This awoke the Frenchman, but aroused from a sound sleep and bewildered, he was slow to reach his Rifle. The dogs were simultaneously aroused, but accustomed to these formidable adversaries, they were of course slow to grapple with the foe, and kept at a prudent distance. The monster made off some two hundred yards, and tore his bundle in pieces. Not partial to such a supper, Bruin, indifferent to the dogs, returned, after all was quiet, and more successful this time, he found the carcass of a Beaver which was lying within six feet of another of the party. Unfortunately for the thief however, this man was not soundly asleep. He hastily arose and saluted his visitor with a shot from his rifle. This shot proved a bad relisher, for although the bold monster carried away his meat, he was found at day light, in a crippled condition, at no great distance eating with slow and reluctant stomach, he was soon after dispatched, to furnish a variety for our trappers, who had hitherto supposed themselves destined to feed on Buffalo meat alone. The animal furnished for them some eight hundred pounds of very excellent meat.[62]



One pleasant morning in the middle of April, (the seasons there are early and spring comes on rapidly) all sat off, in different directions, to examine the traps they had carefully set, on the previous day and to bring in their game. One after another they returned, till all but one were in, And that one's mule came in without his rider. As evening advanced all began to inquire for the lost one. It was an occurence unprecedented, and

there was a stir throughout the camp. The animals were hastily saddled, and each prepared his rifle and doubled his quota of ammunition. When suddenly, as the shades of twilight were beginning to thicken, in came the lost one. An object of admiration. His apparel, which was buckskin throughout, was most thoroughly saturated with water, and his visage wore an aspect of mingled terrow and chagrin. All gathered around him. But he stood most in need of nourishment, having passed the entire day in fasting. "Give me food," said he, "and you shall know the whole." It was told them, to their no little mirth, that he had tied his mule, and proceeded down the bank of the river, to adjust his traps, when one of those terrific monsters of the forest, a huge grizzly Bear, evidently with an empty stomach approached. The mule took fright, broke from his fasting, and fled. His trusty rifle was lying on the ground and Bruin assumed to stand sentry overit. He then marched down the bank to the water's edge, licking his chops in anticipation of a delicious meal. The trappers fled into the middle of the river, where the water was quite up to his neck. The monster placed his foot upon the rivers edge, stretched out his neck, smelt the water and then with his foot tried its temperature, drew back and shock his paw, and sat himself down upon his haunches, to await his victims coming on shore, evidently not doubting that he must and would come soon. And there he sat all the live long day, and to the trappers the day was very long. As twilight approached, Bruin bethought himself of his duties to the family at home and the "evening chores." And making a respectful bow, majestically retired. Our trappers did not even invite his stay till morning, but hastened to the camp, to announce his noble guest. It was an incident frought with much amusement, although an adventure which no one could covet.[63]

In February of 1830, Warren A. Ferris left St. Louis as an employee of the American Fur Company. He accompanied the supply train to the Rocky Mountains and spent the next six years as a company trapper. In the latter part of 1835, he returned to the East, where he prepared his journal notes and maps for publication. In 1842 the Western Literary Messenger *published an edited version in a series of weekly articles. From these articles we learn that on June 18, 1830, while ascending the Platte River near the mouth of the Laramie River, he saw his first grizzly and described him as:*

> a large fierce formidable animal, the most sagacious, most powerful, and most to be feared of all the North American

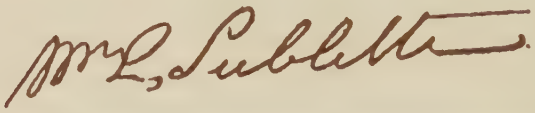
quadrupeds. We shall have occasion elsewhere to note instances of the prowess, cunning and courage of this remarkable animal, and shall relate, in their proper connection, some of the many anecdotes concerning it, which are current among the Indians and trappers of the Rocky Mountains, the stock of which is constantly increasing, as adventure goes on, and brute and human meet in mutual strife. The one we saw, was at a distance, and looked nearly as large as a buffalo, for which they are often mistaken, even by experienced hunters.

In July, while traveling through Cache Valley, Ferris added:

Passing down the valley, we met a number of grizzly bears, one of which of a large size, we mistook for a buffalo bull, and were only convinced of our error when the huge creature erected himself on his haunches, to survey us as we passed. These animals are of every shade of colour, from black to white, and were seen singly in the prairies, busied in digging roots, which constitute their chief subsistence until fruits ripen in the fall.

Two years later, Ferris left the Bear River east of the "Little Lake" *and traveled to Cache Valley by way of Blacksmith's Fork to raise a small cache on Rush Creek. While searching for a fording, Ferris had a very close encounter with a grizzly. During the course of preparing his notes for publication, Ferris also wrote a summary of his observations of the grizzly.* [18]

We proceeded by way of the Little Lake forty-five miles to the head of Cache Valley, and thence thirty-five, by night, to Rush Creek. This is a small stream (that flows into Bear River, on the south side,) bordered by dense thickets, and at this time was not fordable. I followed the brink several hundred yards, in hopes of finding a shoal, where we could cross without wetting our fur; at the same time one of my comrades who was mounted, entered the brush a short distance above me, for the same object. Soon after, hearing a noise like that of some large animal splashing in the water. I ran to the spot, certain that my comrade had attempted to cross, where the river was deep and his horse endangered. Imagine then my agony and surprise when a formidable grizzly bear came rushing, like a wounded buffalo toward me. I instinctively cocked my gun, and intended to discharge it into his open mouth, when he should rear himself to clasp me; but to my great joy he passed a few feet from me, and disappeared in the neighbouring thickets.[64]



This animal, well known to be the most formidable and dangerous in North America, is found in the Rocky Mountains of every shade and color, from black to white, but most frequently of a dark grizzly hue, and is so large that those of a brown color are often mistaken by hunters who are accustomed to see them almost daily, for buffalo.

For instance--returning from the waters of the Columbia to those of the Colorado, in the spring of 1834, with four white men and several Indians, on our way over Horse Prairie, I discovered and passed within one hundred yards of a very large female, accompanied by two cubs, but was prevented from firing upon her from the fear of arousing some lurking foe in this dangerous part of the country, and permitted her to pass without molestation. At our encampment in the evening, the men, who usually discussed the occurrences of the day over their suppers, surprised me by inquiring if I had ever before seen a female bison with two calves. I replied that I had not yet met with an instance of the kind. "What?" exclaimed all of them, "did you not see a cow followed by two calves, who passed us this afternoon at ----?" describing the place--when I immediately discovered that they had mistaken the bear for a buffalo, and found them still incredulous when I asserted the fact.

A trapper, with whom I am acquainted, discovered, as he supposed, several years since, a herd of buffalo near Bear river, and being without provisions, resolved to approach them. Accordingly he followed the winding of a deep gully, which at length brought him among them, but imagine his disappointment and terror, when in lieu of buffalo, he found himself surrounded by thirty grizzly bears, whose aspects were any thing but amiable. Perceiving, however, that he was yet undiscovered, he retraced his steps, and fortunately escaped a horrible death, which in all probability he would have suffered had they observed him.

I have often mistaken them for buffalo, and discovered my error only when they erected themselves to ascertain what passed near them, which they always do when they hear, see, or smell any thing unusual.

They are numerous throughout the mountains, particularly when fruit is most abundant, which serves them for food in the fall; roots being their chief subsistence in the spring. Throughout the long inclement winter season, like the black bear, but unlike the white, they penetrate and lay dormant in caverns.

Most animals, from their superior speed, can escape them; hence, though extremely fond of flesh, they kill very few; yet they often rob wolves of their prey, and devour it at leisure; and sometimes, but seldom, catch a deer or elk that happens to pass near without discovering them.

When wounded they are terrible and most dangerous foes; and unlike all other animals, are so extremely sagacious and vindictive, that though their enemy is concealed from their view, they will rush to the spot whence the smoke of his gun arises in search of him, and if he has not already secured his safety, he will hardly have an opportunity.

Many of the trappers bear the most incontestible proofs of having been roughly handled by them. . . .

There is also a story current among the hunters of two men, whose names I have forgotten, who being one day some distance from the camp, discovered a large bear, busily engaged in tearing up the ground in search of roots. One of them, who was reputed an excellent marksman, desired his companion to ascend a tree, and after selecting one as a refuge for himself in case he should only wound and enrage the bear, deliberately elevated his piece and fired. In an instant the huge and vindictive beast rushed like a tiger toward him, seized him in the act of ascending the tree, a branch of which had caught his coat, and prevented him from accomplishing his purpose, and tore him in pieces. Having thus consummated his vengeance, the bear sank down beside his victim and expired. The other person, terrified at the bloody scene enacted beneath him, descended and ran to camp, informed his comrades of the melancholy circumstance, and returned to the spot with them. They interred the remains of the ill-fated hunter, and on examining the bear, found that he was shot directly through the heart. Hunters usually shoot them through the head, when, if the ball is well directed, they always expire instantly; yet they dare not molest them unless they have the means of escaping, either on their horses or by ascending trees. I have often heard trappers say that they would willingly, were it possible, make an agreement with them not to molest each other. I knew a bear to charge through an encampment of hunters who had fired upon him, knock down two of them in his progress, bite each of them slightly, and continue his flight, with no other demonstrations of anger at the warm reception he met with.

John Gray,* a herculean trapper, has fought several duels with them,

*We had a hunter named John Gray, reputed one of the best marksmen of the mountains; he had frequently given proofs of extraordinary courage and dexterity, especially when on one occasion he dared to attack five bears at once (Hiram Martin Chittenden and Alfred Talbot Richardson, *Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S.J. 1801-1873* [New York: Francis P. Harper, 1905], 4:1398).

in which he has thus far been victorious, though generally at the expense of a gun, which he usually manages to break in the conflict. A Shawnee Indian in the Rocky Mountains, has acquired much fame by attacking and destroying numbers of them, with an old rusty sword, which he flourishes about their ears with no little dexterity and effect.

When they are attacked in a thicket, they charge out into the prairie after their pursuers, and return back, and continue to do so when any of their assailants come near them. Hunting and chasing them on horseback is a favorite amusement of both white and Indians, and is attended with no great danger, for a good horse will easily avoid and outstrip them; but daring hunters, by charging too close upon them, have had their horses caught and frightfully lacerated before they could extricate them, which is only effected by leaving portions of their bodies in the claws and teeth of the bear.[65]

Joe Meek and his companions spent Christmas Day of 1829 on the Wind River, where they had cached their furs from the fall hunt. On the first of January, while William Sublette made his way back to St. Louis to obtain supplies for the coming season, Jedediah Smith and Davey Jackson took their men to the Powder River to establish winter quarters. They remained on the Powder until the first of April, 1830, at which time the men were divided into parties under the command of Smith and Jackson. Meek was assigned to the Smith party, which headed north toward Blackfoot Indian country and trapped the many tributaries of the Yellowstone River. One night while camped on the Rosebud River, Meek had an unwelcomed visitor.

The spring hunt was very successful, and by early summer Smith and Jackson were waiting at their fur caches on the Wind River for the arrival of William Sublette from St. Louis. At the close of the rendezvous, the three partners sold out their business to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The old partners left for St. Louis, and the new company prepared for the fall hunt.

In the fall of 1830, Meek was part of a trapping party which worked the Yellowstone River. Here, two very humorous encounters involving a grizzly took place. [19–21]

It was while trapping up in this country, on the RoseBud River, that an amusing adventure befel our trapper Joe. Being out with two other trappers, at some distance from the great camp, they had killed and

supped off a fat buffalo cow. The night was snowy, and their camp was made in a grove of young aspens. Having feasted themselves, the remaining store of choice pieces was divided between, and placed, hunter fashion, under the heads of the party, on their betaking themselves to their blanket couches for the night. Neither Indian nor wild beast disturbed their repose, as they slept, with their guns beside them, filled with comfort and plenty. But who ever dreams of the presence of a foe under such circumstances? Certainly not our young trapper, who was only awakened about day-break by something very large and heavy walking over him, and snuffing about him with a most insulting freedom. It did not need Yankee powers of guessing to make out who the intruder in camp might be: in truth, it was only too disagreeably certain that it was a full sized grizzly bear, whose keenness of smell had revealed to him the presence of fat cow-meat in that neighborhood.

"You may be sure," says Joe, "that I kept very quiet, while that bar helped himself to some of my buffalo meat, and went a little way off to eat it. But Mark Head, one of the men, raised up, and back came the bar. Down went our heads under the blankets, and I kept mine covered pretty snug, while the beast took another walk over the bed, but finally went off again to a little distance. Mitchel then wanted to shoot; but I said, 'no, no: hold on, or the brute will kill us, sure.' When the bar heard our voices, back he run again, and jumped on the bed as before. I'd have been happy to have felt myself sinking ten feet under ground, while that bar promenaded over and around us! However, he couldn't quite make out our style, and finally took fright, and ran off down the mountain. Wanting to be revenged for his impudence, I went after him, and seeing a good chance, shot him dead. Then I took my turn at running over him awhile!"[66]

Bear, although they did not go in herds, were rather uncomfortably numerous, and sometimes put the trapper to considerable trouble, and fright also; for very few were brave enough to willingly encounter the formidable grizzly, one blow of whose terrible paw, aimed generally at the hunter's head, if not arrested, lays him senseless and torn, an easy victim to the wrathful monster. A gunshot wound, if not directed with certainty to some vulnerable point, has only the effect to infuriate the beast, and

make him trebly dangerous. From the fact that the bear always bites his wound, and commences to run with his head thus brought in the direction from which the ball comes, he is pretty likely to make a straight wake towards his enemy, whether voluntarily or not; and woe be to the hunter who is not prepared for him, with a shot for his eye, or the spot just behind the ear, where certain death enters.

In the frequent encounters of the mountain men with these huge beasts, many acts of wonderful bravery were performed, while some tragedies, and not a few comedies were enacted.

From something humorous in Joe Meek's organization, or some wonderful "luck" to which he was born, or both, the greater part of his adventures with bears, as with men, were of a humorous complexion; enabling him not only to have a story to tell, but one at which his companions were bound to laugh. One of these which happened during the fall hunt of 1830, we will let him tell for himself:

"The first fall on the Yellowstone, Hawkins and myself were coming up the river in search of camp, when we discovered a very large bar on the opposite bank. We shot across, and thought we had killed him, fur he laid quite still. As we wanted to take some trophy of our victory to camp, we tied our mules and left our guns, clothes, and everything except our knives and belts, and swum over to whar the bar war. But instead of being dead, as we expected, he sprung up as we come near him, and took after us. Then you ought to have seen two naked men run! It war a race for life, and a close one, too. But we made the river first. The bank war about fifteen feet high above the water, and the river ten or twelve feet deep; but we didn't halt. Overboard we went, the bar after us, and in the stream about as quick as we war. The current war very strong, and the bar war about half way between Hawkins and me. Hawkins was trying to swim down stream faster than the current war carrying the bar, and I war a trying to hold back. You can reckon that I swam! Every moment I felt myself being washed into the yawning jaws of the mighty beast, whose head war up the stream, and his eyes on me. But the current war too strong for him, and swept him along as fast as it did me. All this time, not a long one, we war looking for some place to land where the bar could not overtake us. Hawkins war the first to make the shore, unknown to the bar, whose head war still up stream; and he set up such a whooping and yelling that the bar landed too, but on the opposite side. I made haste to follow Hawkins, who had landed on the side of the river we started from, either by design or good luck: and then we traveled back a mile and more to what our mules war left--a bar on one side of the river, and two bares on the other!"[67]

a bar on one side of the river, and two bares on the other

A laughable story in this way went the rounds of the camp in this fall of 1830. Milton Sublette was out on a hunt with Meek after buffalo, and they were just approaching the band on foot, at a distance apart of about fifty yards, when a large grizzly bear came out of a thicket and made after Sublette, who, when he perceived the creature, ran for the nearest cotton-wood tree. Meek in the meantime, seeing that Sublette was not likely to escape, had taken sure aim, and fired at the bear, fortunately killing him. On running up to the spot where it laid, Sublette was discovered sitting at the foot of a cotton-wood, with his legs and arms clasped tightly around it.

"Do you always climb a tree in that way?" asked Meek.

"I reckon you took the wrong end of it, that time Milton!"

"I'll be-----, Meek, if I didn't think I was twenty feet up that tree when you shot;" answered the frightened Booshway; and from that time the men never tired of alluding to Milton's manner of climbing a tree.[68]

Zenas Leonard left St. Louis on April 24, 1831, as part of a seventy-man trapping and trading expedition under the command of John Gantt and Jefferson Blackwell. Their route to the mountains was by way of the Missouri, Kansas, Republican, and Platte rivers. They passed the fork of the Platte on August 1 and arrived at the mouth of the Laramie River on the twenty-seventh. Upon their arrival, men were sent out to search the streams for beaver. Numerous signs were found, and the leaders decided to set up a base camp and to divide the men into small trapping parties. Leonard was assigned to Captain A. K. Stephens's group, which was instructed to trap the Laramie. On September 4, Stephens's party left the main camp with orders to return in December to establish winter quarters. Leonard records that two members of their party had an encounter with a grizzly on September 20 while trapping the Laramie River. [22]

On the 20th of Sept. we stopped on the bank of a small creek, to let our horses graze, at the junction of which we seen signs of beaver. Two hunters were sent up this stream with their traps and guns on search of beaver, who, if they should be successful in finding game, were not to

On running up to the spot where it laid, Sublette was discovered sitting at the foot of a cotton-wood, with his legs and arms clasped tightly around it

return until the next day--the main body of the company to move on slowly. After travelling several miles, & hearing nothing of our hunters, we deemed it advisable to encamp for the night, which we did. About midnight we were alarmed by the report of two rifles. Supposing it to be hostile Indians, we put ourselves in an attitude of defence, as soon as possible by throwing up a fort of logs and brush, and keeping up sentinels until morning. On the next morning, about sun rise the two hunters came in, and informed us that it was the report of their guns that had alarmed us, as they had fired them off near the spot where they had expected to find the camp, with the hope of receiving some signal. They had meandered the creek till they came to beaver dams, where they set their traps and turned their horses out to pasture; and were busily engaged in constructing a camp to pass the night in, when they discovered, at a short distance off, a tremendous large Grizzly Bear, rushing upon them at a furious rate.--They immediately sprang to their rifles which were standing against a tree hard-by, one of which was single and the other double triggered; unfortunately in the hurry, the one that was accustomed to the single trigger, caught up the double triggered gun, and when the bear came upon him, not having set the trigger, he could not get his gun off; and the animal approaching within a few feet of him, he was obliged to commence beating it over the head with his gun. Bruin, thinking this rather rough usage, turned his attention to the man with the single triggered gun, who, in trying to set the trigger (supposing he had the double triggered gun) had fired it off, and was also obliged to fall to beating the ferocious animal with his gun; finally, it left them without doing much injury, except tearing the sleeve off one of their coats and biting him through the hand. Four men were immediately despatched for the traps, who returned in the evening with seven or eight beaver. The Grizzly Bear is the most ferocious animal that inhabits these prairies, and are very numerous. They no sooner see you than they will make at you with open mouth. If you stand still, they will come within two or three yards of you, and stand upon their hind feet, and look you in the face, if you have fortitude enough to face them, they will turn and run off; but if you turn they will most assuredly tear you to pieces; furnishing strong proof of the fact, that no wild beast, however daring and ferocious, unless wounded, will attack the face of man.[69]

Job Dye was quick to enlist with a trapping expedition that was being organized to leave for the mountains. The party, consisting of forty-three

men under the command of Captains Rogers and Coffee, left Fort Smith on May 7, 1830. These men traveled up the Arkansas River, had several bad encounters with the Comanche, and seven of the trappers returned to Fort Smith because of "Comanche Fever." *The expedition pushed on to the South Fork of the Platte River, where they had serious problems with the Snake Indians, including a skirmish in which two of their party were brutally killed. Because of the Indian troubles, the party decided to proceed to Taos instead of establishing a winter camp on the Arkansas River. By late November, the party arrived at Taos to spend the winter. Dye found work at a distillery, where he worked until June, 1832. At this time he became ill and required bed care for over two months. By October, Dye had decided to travel on to California and, hearing that the Jackson and Waldo Company was organizing two California-bound parties, he joined one. Under the command of Ewing Young, Dye's party left Taos mid-October, 1831, and traveled to Zuni, where they purchased supplies. The party crossed the mountains and trapped many streams until they reached the Salt River. While hunting one day with Young, Dye encountered his first grizzly.* [23]

The following day Capt. Young and myself seeing a little deer sign, started up on the mountain to try our luck hunting. We discovered several small bands of deer, when the Captain would shoot at them at long range, without having the desired effect. At length I saw a very large grizzly bear, traveling up the ridge, we circled around and got ahead of him, when Capt. Young shot, hitting him in the neck and "creasing" him. Old bruin fell, but soon rallied, rose and looked right at me, when I fired and struck him right in the centre of the forehead, and as the skull is sharp and smooth, the ball flattened, glanced off and whistled as it went. Capt. Young remarked "you have made him much better than he was before receiving the shot,"--away went the bear helter-skelter, down the mountain--and we had no bear meat for supper that night.

Capt. Young not being a very good hunter and yet over-anxious to kill game, I found that it was necessary to separate from him; so I told him that I was going down the hill, following the trail of the bear, directing the Captain to go down on the ridge, to our right, and we would meet about two miles below. I traveled on down the hollow, but could not find the bear's track; finally the track was discovered, but no blood, and in a short time I passed by a small clump of oak bushes, when

the bear came out furiously, close to my horses' heels. I used both whip and spur to the utmost, and it was "nip" and "tuck," over the rocks and through the brush; at length "tuck" got the best of it by reaching level ground clear of obstacles, and he began to leave "nip" behind, which so disheartened him that he became discouraged, gave up the chase and turned off up the side of the mountain, when I wheeled and shot him as he run, breaking his right thigh. I hastily re-loaded my gun and again fired, hitting him in the bulge of the ribs, the ball ranging forward. Bruin now came to a pass in the rocks where he had to climb up a perpendicular wall, four or five feet high, and one of his hind legs being broken, when he attempted to rise he would fall back. I had again re-loaded my rifle and snapped near a dozen caps at him, and on examination I found that the tube was corroded and the percussion packed hard in it, so I took it off and burned it out. By this time the bear had managed to get over the rocks and was slowly going up the mountain. My rifle was now in good order and I followed on after the ferocious monster, on foot, (as it was impossible for me to go on horseback any further,) until I overhauled and gave him a shot in the head and shattered the brain, leaving him stretched lifeless on the ground. Now, my companion had passed on ahead of me and I did not know how to notify him of the capture, but thought I would fire my gun two or three times, yet received no response; I then yelled vociferously to the utmost strength of my voice, and received an answer by a rifle shot. I then made a fire, so that the ascending smoke would attract and guide him to where I was, which proved successful.

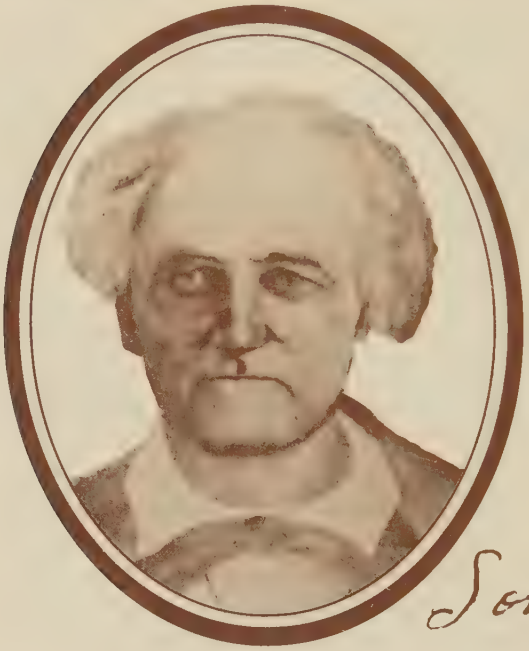
On the arrival of Capt. Young, I had a fine, large, fat bear, nearly dressed, that weighed five or six hundred pounds, which was highly prized, in our camp, and was really worth more, in our famished condition, than its weight in silver, as it was the only meat we had tasted for several weeks, except beaver--a very poor subsistence for hungry trappers. The next difficulty was, how to pack the meat to camp, and several expedients were proposed, finally we adopted the plan of cutting the hide in two pieces, making two large sacks, which after being laced up were filled with meat and packed on Capt. Young's mule and my horse. The sacks weighed about three hundred pounds each, and were difficult to handle, but we soon had them securely placed on the animals.[70]

By late October, 1831, Zenas Leonard's trapping party, under the command of Captain Stephens, was still trapping the Laramie River.

Because of the harshness of the weather, Stephens decided to return to the Platte River to rejoin the rest of the expedition and to prepare for winter quarters. The party retraced their route only to find that the heavy snows had closed the mountain passes they had previously crossed. A winter camp was established. The men prepared to wait out the winter; this proved to be a horrible experience. With the coming of spring, the party began their trek to the Platte, arriving at their destination on May 20. To their amazement, they found that there had been no winter encampment there and, after searching for several days, they could not find any signs of the other parties.

During the month of June, Leonard, along with two companions by the name of Smith and Fully, started trapping some of the small tributaries of the Platte River. One evening while eating, they were confronted by a grizzly. In late June, Thomas Fitzpatrick, bringing supplies to the rendezvous, arrived at Stephens's camp and informed the Captain that the company of Gantt and Blackwell "had become insolvent." *The majority of these men decided to accompany Fitzpatrick to the rendezvous. On July 8, approximately 140 miles up the Platte from the Laramie camp, Leonard recorded a trapper's encounter with a grizzly.* [24–25]

We encountered much difficulty and danger in this excursion, from wild beasts and hostile Indians.--One circumstance with a bear I must relate:--On a pleasant summer evening, when nothing seemed disposed to disturb the tranquility of our forest home, we built a fire under the cliff of a large rock, on the bank of a small creek, to roast some buffaloe meat. After having cooked and eat our evening repast, I was standing close to the rock, apart from the other men ten or twelve feet,--all at once one of them jumped up and ran off, exclaiming "the bear," "the bear!" I instantly cast my eyes to the top of the precipice, where they encountered this hideous monster seated on the rock with his mouth wide open, and his eyes sparkling like fire. My whole frame shook with agitation. I knew that to attempt to run would be certain death. My gun was standing against a tree within my reach, and after calling for the aid of my companions, I raised my rifle to my face and taking deliberate aim at the most fatal spot, fired--which brought sir Bruin to the ground.--In the meantime Smith and Fully came to my assistance, and also discharged the contents of their rifles into his head.[71]



John Dougherty

July 8th. Early in the morning we resumed our journey, but had not proceeded far until we found ourselves in the midst of a bed of quick-sand. So deep was the sand in some places that several of our horses were completely swamped in it, & it was with great difficulty that we succeeded in getting round this swamp, as it were, to continue our journey. Having surmounted this difficulty, one of our men, a Mr. White, who wandered from the company, came well nigh falling a victim to the fury of a grizzly bear--having in the encounter, had one of his arms literally torn from his body, and had it not been for the timely assistance rendered by some of his companions, who afterwards killed the bear, his death would have been the inevitable consequence. This night we selected a high piece of ground for our encampment, where the wind continued to assail us most violently during the whole night. The next day we travelled about twenty miles, without meeting with any thing of consequence.[72]

In the late fall of 1832, Joe Meek was trapping with a group of mountain men under the command of Milton Sublette in Beaverhead Valley near the headwaters of the Jefferson River. Because it was late in the season and the weather was severe, Captain Sublette decided to leave for winter quarters, at the fork of the Snake. By late January, when the food for the animals was gone, it became necessary to move

the camp to the mouth of the Portneuf River, near present-day Pocatello, Idaho. Large groves of cottonwood trees grew along the river, giving ample feed for the stock, but the cold was bitter and the game scarce. The buffalo had been driven east of the mountains, forcing the men to hunt each day to provide camp food. [26]

On one of these hunting expeditions that winter, the party consisting of Meek, Hawkins, Doughty, and Antoine Claymore, they had been out nearly a fortnight without killing anything of consequence, and had clambered up the side of the mountains on the frozen snow, in hopes of finding some mountain sheep. As they traveled along under a projecting ledge of rocks, they came to a place where there were the impressions in the snow of enormous grizzly bear feet. Close by was an opening in the rocks, revealing a cavern, and to this the tracks in the snow conducted. Evidently the creature had come out of its winter den, and made just one circuit back again. At these signs of game the hunters hesitated--certain it was there, but doubtful how to obtain it.

At length Doughty proposed to get up on the rocks above the mouth of the cavern and shoot the bear as he came out, if somebody would go in and dislodge him.

"I'm your man," answered Meek.

"And I too," said Claymore.

"I'll be----if we are not as brave as you are," said Hawkins, as he prepared to follow.

On entering the cave, which was sixteen or twenty feet square, and high enough to stand erect in, instead of one, three bears were discovered. They were standing, the largest one in the middle, with their eyes staring at the entrance, but quite quiet, greeting the hunters only with a low growl. Finding that there was a bear apiece to be disposed of, the hunters kept close to the wall, and out of the stream of light from the entrance, while they advanced a little way, cautiously, towards their game, which, however, seemed to take no notice of them. After maneuvering a few minutes to get nearer, Meek finally struck the large bear on the head with his wiping-stick, when it immediately moved off and ran out of the cave. As it came out, Doughty shot, but only wounded it, and it came rushing back, snorting, and running around in a circle, till the well directed shots from all three killed it on the spot. Two more bears now remained to be disposed of.

The successful shot put Hawkins in high spirits. He began to hallo and laugh, dancing around, and with the others striking the next largest

They were standing, the largest one in the middle, with their eyes staring at the entrance, but quite quiet, greeting the hunters only with a low growl

Peter Skene Ogden

bear to make him run out, which he soon did, and was shot by Doughty. By this time their guns were reloaded, the men growing more and more elated, and Hawkins declaring they were "all Daniels in the lion's den, and no mistake." This, and similar expressions, he constantly vociferated, while they drove out the third and smallest bear. As it reached the cave's mouth, three simultaneous shots put an end to the last one.[73]

In 1832, Nathaniel Wyeth had traveled west to rendezvous with the supply caravan and then continued his journey to the Columbia River to establish a salmon industry. The following spring, he retraced his steps east to obtain necessary supplies and funding for his enterprise. He arrived at the 1833 rendezvous held on the Green River on July 15. While visiting with old friends and discussing issues pertaining to the fur trade, Wyeth made a business arrangement with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, an agreement which would prove disastrous. On July 24, the supply caravan, under the command of William Sublette, left the rendezvous for St. Louis, and Wyeth took advantage of the opportunity to continue his journey back to the States. On the evening of July 27, while descending the Sweetwater River, Sir William Drummond Stewart had a brief encounter with a grizzly bear. The following day, Wyeth had a narrow escape from a wounded grizzly, and two days later, he spotted an enormous white bear. [27]

last night Capt. Stewart had some sport with a bear near our camp in the willows which he wounded but did not kill He represented him as large as a mule. In the afternoon made E. by N. 6 miles to Sweet water river then N. E. 3 miles up it and camped. I came ahead and found a white bear in a thickett and after firing a pistol and throwing stones into it started him out he came as though he meant to fight us but I gave him the shot of my rifle through the body He then rushed on us and I ran as fast as I could Mr. Kamel [Campbell?] snapped at him Mr Sublette ran also being on a mule

the bear followed us no great distance and turned and ran up creek some horsemen followed and killed him after putting 4 more balls into him . . .

30th Started out to hunt the man and in about 8 miles came to the place hunted the whole country over and found nothing but a white bear the largest and the whitest I have yet seen run him about a mile and fired one shot but could not kill him.[74]

On July 4, 1832, Alexander Philip Maximilian, a young German prince, arrived in Boston Harbor, eager to visit America and to explore the trans-Mississippi region. He was accompanied by Karl Bodmer, a young Swiss artist, whose paintings of the expedition are now famous. After spending almost one year visiting sites in the East, which included a river trip to New Orleans, Maximilian's party arrived in St. Louis in March 1833. He was anxious to accompany the supply caravan to the spring rendezvous. However, he was discouraged by William Clark and Benjamin O'Fallon, who felt his time could be better spent traveling up the Missouri River and visiting the American Fur Company trading posts. In April, Maximilian left St. Louis on board the Yellowstone. *He arrived at Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone River on July 24 and, after spending two weeks collecting scientific data, he continued on to Fort McKenzie by keel-boat, arriving on July 28. While ascending the Missouri on July 18 and 19 near the mouth of the Milk River, near present-day Fort Peck, Montana, Maximilian witnessed his first encounter with a grizzly bear.* [28]

After our hunters had returned, with the flesh of a buffalo, we had a favourable wind, which allowed us to use our sail. At a turn of the river we suddenly saw a couple of bears running backwards and forwards on a sand bank before the willow thickets. One of them at length went away, and the other ran along the strand, and fell on the dead body of a buffalo

cow, which was half buried in the mud. While the keel-boat sailed against the stream in the middle of the river, a boat was put out, into which Messrs. Mitchell and Bodmer, and the hunters, Dechamp and Dreidoppel, threw themselves, and rowed along the bank towards the ravenous animal. The sight of this first bear chase was interesting, and we that remained as spectators on deck awaited the result with impatience. Dechamp, a bold and experienced hunter, and an excellent marksman, was put on shore, and crept unperceived along the strand, till he got to the branch of a tree, about eighty paces from the bear, in order, in case of need, to intercept his retreat to the thickets. The ravenous bear sometimes raised his colossal head, looked around him, and then greedily returned to his repast; doubtless, because the wind was in our favour, and these animals are not remarkably quick-sighted. The boat had got to within fifty paces, when the pieces were levelled. Mr. Mitchell fired the first mortal shot, behind the shoulder blade. The other shots followed in quick succession, on which the bear rolled over, uttered fearful cries, tumbled about ten steps forwards, scratched the wounded places furiously with his paws, and turned several times completely over. At this moment Dechamp came up, and put an end to his misery by shooting him through the head. The huge beast lay stretched out: it was fastened by ropes to the boat, and conveyed in triumph to the ship, where it was measured, and a drawing made of it. I much regretted that I had not taken part in the sport; but I had not believed that it was possible, in such an open, unprotected spot, to get so near the bear.

This grizzly bear was a male, about three years old, and therefore, not of the largest size: he was six feet two inches and two lines in length, from the nose to the tip of the tail; the latter being eight inches. His colour was dark brown, with the point of the hair of a rusty colour, but new hair already appeared of a lighter grey, with yellow tips. This bear is known to be a very dangerous beast of prey, and is willingly avoided by the hunters: if fired at, he very frequently attacks, even if not wounded, when they suddenly come too near him. If he perceives a man in time, he generally gets out of the way, especially when he has the wind. Almost all the hunters of the prairie relate their adventures with the bears, and whole volumes might be filled with such stories. It is certain that many white men and Indians have been torn to pieces by these dangerous animals, especially in former times, when they were very numerous, and lived to a great age, as may be seen in Lewis and Clark's Travels. Even last year, five of Mr. Mitchell's hunters, who had wounded one of these animals, were so quickly pursued by him, that they were

James Beckwourth

obliged to take refuge in the Missouri. This species of bear cannot climb, and therefore a tree is a good means to escape their attacks. The true country of these animals on the Missouri, where they are at present the most numerous, is the tract about Milk River. Here there is no wood of any extent in which they are not found, but they are likewise seen everywhere in a north-westerly direction. In these solitudes, the long claws of this bear serve to dig up many kinds of roots in the prairie, on which he chiefly subsists, but he is especially fond of animal food, particularly the flesh of dead animals. There is no other species of bear on the Upper Missouri, for the black bear is not found so high up. At the place where we had killed the bear, it would have been easy to shoot many of these animals, by posting ourselves near the dead buffalo cow: the whole sand bank was covered with the prints of bears' footsteps, and trodden down like a threshing-floor; but our time was too short and too precious: we, therefore, proceeded on our voyage till a violent thunder-storm threatened us, and we lay to, by the high bank of the prairie, where our bear was skinned. During the night, torrents of rain fell, which wetted our books and plants in the cabin.

On the following day, the 19th, we had another chase after a colossal bear, which swam through the Missouri to a dead buffalo; but our young hunters were this time too eager, and fired too soon, so that the animal escaped, though probably wounded, as fifteen rifles were discharged at

him. Afterwards we saw several beaver lodges. The people towed the steamer in the afternoon, making their way along the bank, through a dense willow thicket. All on a sudden they cried that there were bears close to them; on which the hunters immediately leaped on shore. Mr. Mitchell had scarcely arrived at the head of the towers, when he perceived a she bear with two cubs. Dechamp came to his aid, and in a few minutes the three animals were in our power. Mr. Mitchell had killed the mother, which was of a pale yellowish-red colour; one of the cubs, which was brought alive on board, was whitish about the head and neck, and brownish grey on the body; the other was dark brown. The females of these animals are generally of a lighter colour than the males, which is the case with many beasts of prey, particularly the European fox. The live cub was in a great rage, and growled terribly; it was impossible for me to save his life.[75]

Kit Carson was part of the Thomas Fitzpatrick supply caravan that left Taos in 1831 for the rendezvous. After two years of trapping in the mountains, he returned to Taos in October of 1833 and met Stephen Lee, a partner of Charles Bent and Ceran St. Vrain. Lee had purchased goods to take to the mountains to either sell or trade. Carson joined Lee's party and left Taos in the latter part of October. They followed the Spanish Trail north until they arrived at the White River. Following the White to its junction with the Green River and then up the Green to the mouth of the "Winty" *(Duchesne River) in northeastern Utah, they found Antoine Robidoux's camp. Since it was late in the season, they decided to spend the winter at the mouth of the Winty. During this period, some trappers came to Lee's camp and informed them that Fitzpatrick and Bridger were encamped on the Snake River. In March, Carson and Lee found the trappers' encampment. Lee sold his goods to Fitzpatrick and left immediately for Taos. Carson and three companions spent the next few months trapping on the headwaters of the Laramie River near the Colorado–Utah border. One night after camp had been established, Carson decided to do some hunting to obtain camp meat. Unfortunately, it was Carson who became the hunted.* [29]

I had gone about a mile when I discovered some elk. I was on the side of a ridge. I shot one and immediately after the discharge of my gun I heard in my rear a noise. I turned around and saw two very large grizzly bears making for me. My gun was unloaded and I could not possibly reload it in time to fire. There were some trees at a short distance. I made

for them, the bears after me. As I got to one of the trees, I had to drop my gun, the bears rushing for me I had to make all haste to ascend the tree. I got up some ten or fifteen feet and then had to remain till the bears would find it convenient to leave. One remained but a short time, the other remained for some time and with his paws would nearly unroot the small aspen trees that were around the one which I had ascended. He made several attempts at the one in which I was, but could do no damage. He finally concluded to leave, of which I was heartily pleased, never having been so scared in my life. I remained in the tree for some time, and, when I considered the bears far enough off, I descended and made for my camp in as great haste as possible. It was dark when I arrived and (I) could not send for the elk which I had killed, so we had to pass the night without anything to eat. During the night we caught beaver, so we had something for breakfast.[76]

In 1834, John K. Townsend accompanied William Sublette's supply train to the mountains, becoming a participant in the controversial race to the rendezvous between Sublette and Nathaniel Wyeth. Sublette arrived at the trappers' camp on June 19, just a few days ahead of Wyeth, forcing Wyeth to establish Fort Hall for the sale of his supplies. On the twenty-second, both companies moved from the Green River to Ham's Fork, where the rendezvous got underway and lasted for several weeks. On July 2, Townsend bid farewell to his friends at the rendezvous and, accompanying Wyeth, traveled up Ham's Fork and across the divide to the Bear River, in the vicinity of Soda Springs, Idaho. On the evening of the tenth, while descending the Blackfoot River en route to the Snake River, the party was attacked by a grizzly. On the fifteenth, Townsend arrived at the junction of the Portneuf and Snake rivers, the site chosen by Wyeth for building Fort Hall. On the sixteenth, a dozen men including Townsend were sent to procure food for the camp. On the evening of June 21, approximately sixty-four miles northeast of the Portneuf camp, Townsend recorded some of his impressions of the grizzly which visited their camp every night. Two days later, while hunting in the same location, Townsend had a dangerous encounter with a grizzly—an encounter he thought would be his last. [30–32]

Towards evening, we struck Blackfoot river, a small, sluggish, stagnant stream, heading with the waters of rapid rivulet passed yesterday, which empties into the Bear river. This stream passes in a north-westerly direction through a valley of about six miles in width, covered with quagmires,

William Doughty

through which we had great difficulty in making our way. As we approached our encampment, near a small grove of willows, on the margin of the river, a tremendous grizzly bear rushed out upon us. Our horses ran wildly in every direction, snorting with terror, and became nearly unmanageable. Several balls were instantly fired into him, but they only seemed to increase his fury. After spending a moment in rending each wound, (their invariable practice,) he selected the person who happened to be nearest, and darted after him, but before he proceeded far, he was sure to be stopped again by a ball from another quarter. In this way he was driven about amongst us for perhaps fifteen minutes, at times so near some of the horses, that he received several severe kicks from them. One of the pack horses was fairly fastened upon by the terrific claws of the brute, and in the terrified animal's efforts to escape the dreaded gripe, the pack and saddle were broken to pieces and disengaged. One of our mules also lent him a kick in the head while pursuing it up an adjacent hill, which sent him rolling to the bottom. Here he was finally brought to a stand.

The poor animal was so completely surrounded by enemies that he became bewildered. He raised himself upon his hind feet, standing almost erect, his mouth partly open, and from his protruding tongue the blood fell fast in drops. While in this position, he received about six more balls, each of which made him reel. At last, as in complete desperation,

he dashed into the water, and swam several yards with astonishing strength and agility, the guns cracking at him constantly; but he was not to proceed far. Just then, Richardson, who had been absent, rode up, and fixing his deadly aim upon him, fired a ball into the back of his head, which killed him instantly. The strength of four men was required to drag the ferocious brute from the water, and upon examining his body, he was found completely riddled; there did not appear to be four inches of his shaggy person, from the hips upward, that had not recieved a ball. There must have been at least thirty shots made at him, and probably few missed him; yet such was his tenacity of life, that I have no doubt he would have succeeded in crossing the river, but for the last shot in the brain. He would probably weigh, at the least, six hundred pounds, and was about the height of an ordinary steer. The spread of the foot, laterally, was ten inches, and the claws measured seven inches in length. This animal was remarkably lean; when in good condition, he would, doubtless, much exceed in weight the estimate I have given. Richardson, and two other hunters, in company, killed two in the course of the afternoon, and saw several others.[77]

The dreaded grizzly bear is also quite common in this neighborhood; two have just been seen in some bushes near, and they visit our camp almost every night, attracted by the piles of meat which are heaped all around us. The first intimation we have of his approach is a great *grunt* or *snort*, unlike any sound I ever heard, but much more querulous than fierce; then we hear the scraping and tramping of his huge feet, and the snuffing of his nostrils, as the savory scent of the meat is wafted to them. He approaches nearer and nearer, with a stealthy and fearful pace, but just as he is about to accomplish the object of his visit, he suddenly stops short; the snuffing is repeated at long and trembling intervals, and if the slightest motion is then made by one of the party, away goes *"Ephraim,"* like a cowardly burglar as he is, and we heard no more of him that night.[78]

This afternoon I observed a large flock of wild geese passing over, and upon watching them, perceived that they alighted about a mile and a half from us, where I knew there was a lake. Concluding that a little change of diet might be agreeable, I sallied forth with my gun across the plain in quest of the birds. I soon arrived at a thick copse of willow and currant bushes, which skirted the water, and was about entering, when I heard a sort of angry growl or grunt directly before me--and instantly after, saw a grizzly bear of the largest kind erect himself upon his hind feet within a dozen yards of me, his savage eyes glaring with horrible malignity, his mouth wide open, and his tremendous paws raised as though ready to descend upon me. For a moment, I thought my hour had come, and that I was fated to die an inglorious death away from my friends and my kindred; but after waiting a moment in agonizing suspense, and the bear showing no inclination to advance, my lagging courage returned, and cocking both barrels of my gun, and presenting it as steadily as my nerves would allow, full at the shaggy breast of the creature, I retreated slowly backwards. Bruin evidently had no notion of braving gunpowder, but I did not know whether, like a dog, if the enemy retreated he would not yet give me a chase; so when I had placed about a hundred yards between us, I wheeled about and flew, rather than ran, across the plain towards the camp. Several times during this run for life, (as I considered it,) did I fancy that I heard the bear at my heels; and not daring to look over my shoulder to ascertain the fact, I only increased my speed, until the camp was nearly gained, when, from sheer exhaustion I relaxed my efforts, fell flat upon the ground, and looked behind me. The whole space between me and the copse was untenanted, and I was forced to acknowledge, with a feeling strongly allied to shame, that my fears alone had represented the bear in chase of me.

When I arrived in camp, and told my break-neck adventure to the men, our young companion, Mr. Ashworth, expressed a wish to go and kill the bear, and requested the loan of my double-barrelled gun for this purpose. This I at first peremptorily refused, and the men, several of whom were experienced hunters, joined me in urging him not to attempt the rash adventure. At length, however, finding him determined on going, and that rather than remain, he would trust to his own single gun, I was finally induced to offer him mine, with a request, (which I had hoped would check his daring spirit,) that he would leave the weapon in a situation where I could readily find it; for after he had made one shot, he would never use a gun again.

He seemed to heed our caution and advice but little, and, with a dogged and determined air, took the way across the plain to the bushes, which we could see in the distance. I watched him for some time, until I saw him enter them, and then, with a sigh that one so young and talented should be lost from amongst us, and a regret that we did not forcibly prevent his going, I sat myself down, distressed and melancholy. We all listened anxiously to hear the report of the gun; but no sound reaching our ears, we began to hope that he had failed in finding the animal, and in about fifteen minutes, to my inexpressible relief, we saw him emerge from the copse, and bend his steps slowly towards us. When he came in, he seemed disappointed, and somewhat angry. He said he had searched the bushes in every direction, and although he had found numerous footprints, no bear was to be seen. It is probable that when I commenced my retreat in one direction, bruin made off in the other, and that although he was willing to dispute the ground with me, and prevent my passing his lair, he was equally willing to back out of an engagement in which his fears suggested that he might come off the loser.[79]

With the close of the 1833 rendezvous at the junction of Horse Creek and the Green River, Captain B. L .E. Bonneville sent Joseph Walker with a portion of his men, including Zenas Leonard, to the Humboldt River and on to California to trap for beaver. In the spring of 1834, Walker's party returned to the Rocky Mountains and on July 5 were on the Bear River searching for Bonneville, whom they succeeded in finding within a few days. On July 20, Captain M. S. Cerre, an assistant to Bonneville, arrived in camp with forty men and a large supply of merchandise from St. Louis. By late July, arrangements were being made for the fall hunt in which Leonard was assigned to Joseph Walker's party. On August 8, near the headwaters of the Lewis River (Snake River), one of Leonard's party bled to death as a result of wounds inflicted by a grizzly. [33]

July 30th. Having every necessary arrangement completed, Mr. Cerrie returned to the State of Missouri with 45 men, and wht fur, &c. we had in store. Capt. Bonneville was left to make his fall hunt on the head waters of the Columbia river, and the adjacent country with 50 men, and Capt. Walker with 55 men, being the balance of our force, to cross the Rocky mountains to the waters of the Missouri river, and then continue hunting and trading with the Indians until the month of June, 1835, when Capt. Bonneville with his men would join us on the Bighorn river,

Joseph Meek

at the mouth of Popoasia Creek, which empties into the Bighorn below Wind river mountain.

After the usual ceremony of parting on such occasions, which is performed by each one affectionately shaking hands all round--we separated, each division taking off in a separate direction. Capt. Walker continued up Bear river in an eastern direction, and the first night encamped at Smith's Fork. In the morning we resumed our journey in the same direction, being the most direct route to the summit of the mountains, nothing occurring more than usual with the exception of killing any quantity of game we might think proper, until about the 8th of August, when, as the company were passing through a small prairie, we discovered a large grizzly bear laying in the shade of some brush at the edge of the woods, when four of us started for the purpose of killing him, but on coming close, the bear heard us and ran into the thicket. We now took separate courses, intending to surround the bear & chase him out and have some sport; but one man, as we came to the thicket, acted very imprudently by dismounting and following a buffaloe path into the brush, when the bear, hearing our horses on the opposite side, started out on the same path and met the man, when he attempted to avoid it by climbing a small tree, but being too closely pressed was unable to get out of the reach of the bear, and as it passed, caught him by the leg and tore the tendon of his thigh in a most shocking manner. Before we could get to his aid the bear made off and finally escaped.

Here we encamped and remained until the next day, when the wounded man expired--having bled to death from the wound, although every effort in our power was of no use.[80]

In the spring of 1834, Osborne Russell was hired by Nathaniel Wyeth at Independence, Missouri, to work for the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company, which Wyeth and three Boston merchants had organized. Russell accompanied Wyeth to the rendezvous and to the Snake River, where construction on Fort Hall started on July 18. With the completion of the fort on August 4, Wyeth set out for the Columbia River leaving twelve men, including Russell, to handle his affairs. On August 12, Russell and three companions traveled thirty miles east to the Portneuf River, where they had their first buffalo hunt to obtain meat for the camp. Russell was unable to kill a big bull which he had wounded, but one of the party did kill a fat cow. However, by August 20, the men were once again in need of food. The hunt which followed almost cost Russell his life because of a confrontation with a grizzly near Fort Hall. On March 15, 1835, a trapping expedition (ten trappers and seven camp keepers, including Russell) under the direction of Joseph Gale left Fort Hall for Cache Valley. The party arrived on April 1 and, after staying several days, they moved across the mountain to Snake Lake'' *(Bear Lake). On May 1, Russell was camped on Thomas' Fork, twenty miles from the junction with the Bear River. The following day the party encountered a huge grizzly.* [34–35]

On the 20th of August we started again to hunt meat. We left the fort and traveled about six miles, when we discovered a grizzly bear digging and eating roots in a piece of marshy ground near a large bunch of willows. The mulatto approached within 100 yards and shot him through the left shoulder. He gave a hideous growl and sprang into the thicket. The mulatto then said: ''Let him go; he is a dangerous varmint,'' but not being acquainted with the nature of the these animals I determined on making another trial, and persuaded the mulatto to assist me. We walked around the bunch of willows where the bear lay, keeping close together, with our rifles ready cocked and presented towards the bushes, until near the place where he had entered, when we heard a sullen growl about ten feet from us, which was instantly followed by a spring of the bear toward us, his enormous jaws extended and eyes flashing fire. Oh Heavens! was ever anything so hideous? We could not retain sufficient

presence of mind to shoot at him but took to our heels, separating as we ran, the bear taking after me. Finding I could outrun him, he left and turned to the other, who wheeled about and discharged his rifle, covering the bear with smoke and fire, the ball, however, missing him. He turned and bounded toward me. I could go no further without jumping into a large quagmire which hemmed me in on three sides. I was obliged to turn about and face him. He came within about ten paces of me, then suddenly stopped and raised his ponderous body erect, his mouth wide open, gazing at me with a beastly laugh. At this moment I pulled trigger, as I knew not what else to do and hardly knew that I did this, but it accidentally happened that my rifle was pointed towards the bear when I pulled and the ball piercing his heart, he gave one bound from me, uttered a deathly howl and fell dead, but I trembled as if I had an ague fit for half an hour after. We butchered him, as he was very fat, packed the meat and skin on our horses and returned to the fort with the trophies of our bravery, but I secretly determined in my own mind never to molest another wounded grizzly bear in a marsh or thicket.[81]

We then crossed the river and ascended a branch called Thomas' Fork in a north direction about 10 Mls. the next day we started across the Mountain in a North direction and after travelling about 5 Mls. we discovered a large Grizzly Bear about 200 yards ahead of us: one of our hunters approached and shot him dead on the spot. We all rode up and dismounted to butcher him: he was an enormous animal a hideous brute a savage looking beast. On removing the skin we found the fat on his back measured six inches deep. He had probably not left his winter quarters more than 2 hours as we saw his [tracks] on the snow where he had just left the thick forest of pines on the side of the Mountain.[82]

In 1834, Isaac P. Rose was a member of Nathaniel Wyeth's expedition to the mountains. He accompanied Wyeth to the Snake River, where he assisted in building Fort Hall. Rose spent the winter of 1834–35 at Fort Hall and during the spring hunt was camped on the Salt River, where he narrowly escaped a grizzly. A few weeks later, while camped in Cache Valley on the Bear River, a group of trappers and Ute Indians

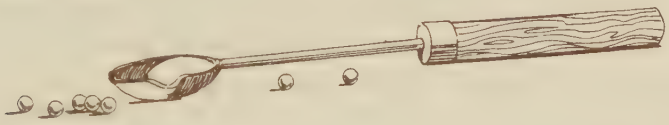
had some sport with a grizzly who ventured too near their camp. Rose attended the 1835 rendezvous located at the junction of Horse Creek and Green River and, with the close of the summer activities, was part of a trapping party camped in Little Jackson Hole, at present-day Bondurant, Wyoming. It was on this occasion that Reverend Samuel Parker gave his famous August 23 sermon. Early the following day, the party discovered a grove of chokecherry bushes up a side canyon and, while the men were supplementing their morning meal, they were attacked by a grizzly bear which almost caught Caleb Wilkins and his mule before hunters killed the ferocious animal. [36–38]

A spot was selected for the camp, and tents were erected, and while the camp-keepers and Indians were busy getting things in order, Rose strolled to a small hill about fifty yards distant. From this spot he saw a large bunch of willows and cedars further up the stream. Thinking it a good place for a beaver dam he walked toward it. While passing a bunch of willows he heard a savage growl, and turning quickly, saw an enormous grizzly bear not more than fifteen feet distant. The animal had reared on its hind legs, and for one moment Rose and the bear stood face to face. He was unarmed. He had left his rifle at the camp, and as the bear with a savage growl came toward him he thought "discretion the better part of valor," and started at the top of his speed for a pine tree about thirty yards distant. Rose says he feels confident he sprang five or six feet up into that tree, and catching a limb swung himself out of the bear's reach; but not one moment too soon, as the grizzly was close behind him, and rearing up it tore off every limb it could reach in its fury. He would then walk around the tree growling fiercely. He would then rear up again and try to reach his intended victim. Rose would occasionally break off a limb and throw it down. This the bear would seize and savagely tear to pieces. At length his female companion made her appearance. Mr. Grizzly started to meet her, and the two wandered away up stream. Rose at once returned to camp, and from that time forward never started on any expedition without taking with him his trusty rifle.[83]

One morning as the trappers were preparing to visit their traps they were astonished to see a large grizzly bear walking leisurely toward the

camp and not more than three hundred yards distant. When he first caught sight of the trappers he paused for a few seconds, as though to make a reconnoisance, then growling fiercely he came boldly on as if determined to do battle with the whole camp. Some of the boys thought this a good opportunity to have some sport, and, leaving their rifles in camp, mounted their horses, and borrowing some bows and arrows from the Utes, they started out to meet their grizzly foe. Two of the trappers galloped around the bear, one on each side of him, and, suddenly wheeling, they each rode close enough to shoot an arrow into the monster. Not being very proficient with this kind of weapon their arrows did not penetrate the body of the bear more than an inch or two. This only served to make him furious, and with a savage growl he gave chase to the nearest horseman. Another trapper would then shoot an arrow into him, and the grizzly would turn at once and give chase to his new adversary. This sport was kept up until about fifty arrows were sticking into the bear, not one of them inflicting a wound deep enough to be mortal.

One of the Ute Indians now rode up, and with his bow and arrows shot the bear through the lungs, putting an end to the animal and the sport at the same time.[84]



The next morning, as they were riding up the banks of a small stream, they suddenly came upon a grove of choke-cherry bushes, loaded with ripe fruit. The trappers immediately surrounded the grove, about an acre in extent, and commenced eating the cherries, thinking them quite a treat. Now, it is well known, the grizzly bear is remarkably fond of choke-cherries, and scarcely had the trappers surrounded the grove and commenced eating, when there was a sudden rush through the bushes, a savage growl, and an immense grizzly made his appearance. A trapper by the name of Caleb Wilkins, mounted on a mule, was near the spot where the grizzly emerged from the bushes, and the ferocious animal went for him at once. Caleb, seeing the bear advance, wheeled his mule and started; but the mule would not hurry, and the bear soon caught up with him, but it was evident the grizzly was a stranger to the habits of the mule, for as soon as he came within reach of that animal, he opened his ponderous jaws with the intention of grabbing him by the hinder parts; but the mule was on the alert, and as soon as the bear had come within

reach, he let fly at him with his hind feet, nearly dislocating his jaw; but the bear, uttering a savage growl, continued the race, and again coming up with the mule, endeavored to seize him with his enormous paw. All this time the trappers were laughing and shouting: "Look out, Caleb!" "Go it, Caleb!" but finding the race was likely to end disastrously for Caleb and the mule, one of the trappers galloped up to the bear and shot him in the shoulder, and being wounded, the grizzly turned and started for the man who had fired the shot. Another and another shot was fired into the grizzly, and for some time he was kept busy wheeling and facing each new enemy, till at last a ball from one of the rifles struck him in a vital part, and he fell over and died. From that time forward the grizzly was known as "Caleb," and I believe he is called so to this day.[85]

Joe Meek was present at the 1835 rendezvous and was among the trappers at Little Jackson Hole when Reverend Parker chastised the Indians for hunting buffalo during his Sunday sermon. Meek spent the fall trapping the headwaters of the Snake River and in December arrived at winter quarters, located at the big bend of the Yellowstone River. During the winter, while trapping sixty miles downstream from the main camp, Meek and three companions encountered a grizzly, which provided Meek some amusement at the expense of one of his companions. Meek attended the 1836 rendezvous on Green River and in the fall went north to trap the Yellowstone and Three Forks country of the Missouri River. The large population of grizzlies throughout the Yellowstone Valley made the area very dangerous for both the trappers and the camp-keepers. As the mountain men worked the many streams that autumn, several of the trappers, including Meek, had some life-threatening experiences. [39–42]

In December, Bridger's command went into winter quarters in the bend of the Yellowstone. Buffalo, elk, and bear were in great abundance, all that fall and winter. Before they went to camp, Meek, Kit Carson, Hawkins, and Doughty were trapping together on the Yellowstone, about sixty miles below. They had made their temporary camp in the ruins of an old fort, the walls of which were about six feet high. One evening, after coming in from setting their traps, they discovered three large grizzly bears in the river bottom, not more than half a mile off, and Hawkins went out to shoot one. He was successful in killing one at the first shot, when the other two, taking fright, ran towards the fort. As they came near enough to show that they were likely to invade camp, Meek and Carson,

not caring to have a bear fight, clambered up a cotton-wood tree close by, at the same time advising Doughty to do the same. But Doughty was tired, and lazy besides, and concluded to take his chances where he was; so he rolled himself in his blanket and laid quite still. The bears, on making the fort, reared up on their hind legs and looked in as if meditating taking it for a defence.

The sight of Doughty lying rolled in his blanket, and the monster grizzlys inspecting the fort, caused the two trappers who were safely perched in the cotton-wood to make merry at Doughty's expense; saying all the mirth-provoking things they could, and then advising him not to laugh, for fear the bears should seize him. Poor Doughty, agonizing between suppressed laughter and growing fear, contrived to lie still however, while the bears gazed upward at the speakers in wonder, and alternately at the suspicious looking bundle inside the fort. Not being able to make out the meaning of either, they gave at last a grunt of dissatisfaction, and ran off into a thicket to consult over these strange appearances; leaving the trappers to enjoy the incident as a very good joke. For a long time after, Doughty was reminded how close to the ground he laid, when the grizzlys paid their compliments to him. Such were the every-day incidents from which the mountain-men contrived to derive their rude jests, and laughter-provoking reminiscences.[86]

It happened, however, during this autumn, that while the main camp was in the valley of the Yellowstone, a party of eight trappers, including Meek and a comrade named Stanberry, were trapping together on the Mussel Shell, when the question as to which was the bravest man got started between them, and at length, in the heat of the controversy, assumed such importance that it was agreed to settle the matter on the following day according to the Virginia code of honor, i.e., by fighting a duel, and shooting at each other with guns, which hitherto had only done execution on bears and Indians.

But some listening spirit of the woods determined to avert the danger from these two equally brave trappers, and save their ammunition for its legitimate use, by giving them occasion to prove their courage almost on the instant. While sitting around the camp-fire discussing the coming event of the duel at thirty paces, a huge bear, already wounded by a shot

Poor Doughty, agonizing between suppressed laughter and growing fear, contrived to lie still however, while the bears gazed upward at the speakers in wonder

from the gun of their hunter who was out looking for game, came running furiously into camp, giving each man there a challenge to fight or fly.

"Now," spoke up one of the men quickly, "let Meek and Stanberry prove which is bravest, by fighting the bear!" "Agreed," cried the two as quickly, and both sprang with guns and wiping-sticks in hand, charging upon the infuriated beast as it reached the spot where they were awaiting it. Stanberry was a small man, and Meek a large one. Perhaps it was owing to this difference of stature that Meek was first to reach the bear as it advanced. Running up with reckless bravado Meek struck the creature two or three times over the head with his wiping-stick before aiming to fire, which however he did so quickly and so surely that the beast fell dead at his feet. This act settled the vexed question. Nobody was disposed to dispute the point of courage with a man who would stop to strike a grizzly before shooting him: therefore Meek was proclaimed by the common voice to be "cock of the walk" in that camp. The pipe of peace was solemnly smoked by himself and Stanberry, and the tomahawk buried never more to be resurrected between them, while a fat supper of bear meat celebrated the compact of everlasting amity.[87]

It was not an unfrequent occurrence for a grizzly bear to be run into camp by the hunters, in the Yellowstone country where this creature abounded. An amusing incident occurred not long after that just related, when the whole camp was at the Cross Creeks of the Yellowstone, on the south side of that river. The hunters were out, and had come upon two or three bears in a thicket. As these animals sometimes will do, they started off in a great fright, running toward camp, the hunters after them, yelling, frightening them still more. A runaway bear, like a runaway horse, appears not to see where it is going, but keeps right on its course no matter what dangers lie in advance. So one of these animals having got headed for the middle of the encampment, saw nothing of what lay in its way, but ran on and on, apparently taking note of nothing but the yells in pursuit. So sudden and unexpected was the charge which he made upon camp, that the Indian women, who were sitting on the ground engaged in some ornamental work, had no time to escape out of the way. One of them was thrown down and run over, and another was struck with such violence that she was thrown

One of them was thrown down and run over, and another was struck with such violence
that she was thrown twenty feet from the spot where
she was hastily attempting to rise

twenty feet from the spot where she was hastily attempting to rise. Other objects in camp were upset and thrown out of the way, but without causing so much merriment as the mishaps of the two women who were so rudely treated by the monster.[88]

It was also while the camp was at the Cross Creeks of the Yellowstone that Meek had one of his best fought battles with a grizzly bear. He was out with two companions, one Gardiner, and Mark Head, a Shawnee Indian. Seeing a very large bear digging roots in the creek bottom, Meek proposed to attack it, if the others would hold his horse ready to mount if he failed to kill the creature. This being agreed to he advanced to within about forty paces of his game, when he raised his gun and attempted to fire, but the cap bursting he only roused the beast, which turned on him with a terrific noise between a snarl and a growl, showing some fearful looking teeth. Meek turned to run for his horse, at the same time trying to put a cap on his gun; but when he had almost reached his comrades, their horses and his own took fright at the bear now close on his heels, and ran, leaving him alone with the now fully infuriated beast. Just at the moment he succeeded in getting a cap on his gun, the teeth of the bear closed on his blanket capote which was belted around the waist, the suddenness and force of the seizure turning him around, as the skirt of his capote yielded to the strain and tore off at the belt. Being now nearly face to face with his foe, the intrepid trapper thrust his gun into the creature's mouth and attempted again to fire, but the gun being double triggered and not set, it failed to go off. Perceiving the difficulty he managed to set the triggers with the gun still in the bear's mouth, yet no sooner was this done than the bear succeeded in knocking it out, and firing as it slipped out, it hit her too low down to inflict a fatal wound and only served to irritate her still farther.

In this desperate situation when Meek's brain was rapidly working on the problem of live Meek or live bear, two fresh actors appeared on the scene in the persons of two cubs, who seeing their mother in difficulty seemed desirous of doing something to assist her. Their appearance seemed to excite the bear to new exertions, for she made one desperate blow at Meek's empty gun with which he was defending himself, and knocked it out of his hands, and far down the bank or sloping hillside where the

struggle was now going on. Then being partially blinded by rage, she seized one of her cubs and began to box it about in a most unmotherly fashion. This diversion gave Meek a chance to draw his knife from the scabbard, with which he endeavored to stab the bear behind the ear: but she was too quick for him, and with a blow struck it out of his hand, as she had the gun, nearly severing his forefinger.

At this critical juncture the second cub interfered, and got a boxing from the old bear, as the first one had done. This too, gave Meek time to make a movement, and loosening his tomahawk from his belt, he made one tremendous effort, taking deadly aim, and struck her just behind the ear, the tomahawk sinking into the brain, and his powerful antagonist lay dead before him. When the blow was struck he stood with his back against a little bluff of rock, beyond which it was impossible to retreat. It was his last chance, and his usual good fortune stood by him. When the struggle was over the weary victor mounted the rock behind him and looked down upon his enemy slain; and "came to the conclusion that he was satisfied with bar-fighting."[89]

Isaac Rose witnessed the arrival of the supply train and its company to the Green River rendezvous in 1836. Dr. and Mrs. Marcus Whitman and Reverend and Mrs. Henry Spaulding were members of this company. Rose and many of the other mountain men were overwhelmed by the presence of the missionaries' wives, who were soon the center of attention. Narcissa Whitman and Eliza Spaulding were the first white women to cross the Rockies and attend a summer rendezvous. The missionaries spent endless hours listening to the incredible stories of the mountain men and their activities in the mountains. At the close of the rendezvous, Rose was assigned to Bridger's party, which headed north to trap the headwaters of the Green and Snake rivers, where they stayed for several weeks. After a brief encounter with a party of Blackfoot Indians, they moved across the divide to the Bitterroot River, where Isaac Rose and Mark Head had a very ugly meeting with a grizzly. [43]

Rose and Mark Head had been out on a hunt, and were returning down the river toward the camp. They had just approached a ravine when Rose, who was riding in advance, suddenly halted. He had caught sight of a huge grizzly moving down through the bushes, on the other side of the ravine. "Mark," said Rose, pointing out the enormous animal, "there's 'Caleb,' and we might as well make four dollars this afternoon as not."

This too, gave Meek time to make a movement, and loosening his tomahawk from his belt, he made one tremendous effort, taking deadly aim, and struck her just behind the ear

William Craig

(Four dollars was the price paid by the company for a grizzly's pelt.) Then slipping from his saddle he handed the bridle to Mark, and creeping through the bushes he reached a spot from where he could get a fair shot at the grizzly as he passed down the ravine. The bear soon came opposite, and not more than thirty yards distant, and Rose, raising his rifle, blazed away. At the crack of the gun the bear rolled over on his side and commenced biting furiously at the spot where the ball had entered his body.

"He's got it," said Rose, addressing his companion. "Caleb's a goner," and he at once commenced reloading his rifle.

It is an invariable custom with the western trapper or hunter after discharging his rifle to reload at once, so that he may be prepared for what may come next. The bear, after writhing and twisting for some time, contrived to scramble into a thicket of bushes, where he lay perfectly quiet.

"He's dead enough," said Rose, "and we had better get to work and take off the pelt." Fastening the horses to some bushes, Mark advanced toward the thicket, and pulling the bushes to one side he called out: "All right, Rose, he's as dead as a mackerel!" and taking out his knife he seized the bear by the paw and was about to commence operations, when the bear suddenly seized him with his enormous paws, and dragging him down between his fore legs, commenced chewing his head, Mark

Job Dye

in the meantime uttering the most fearful yells and cries for help. Rose immediately rushed forward to the spot. On reaching the bushes he saw Mark, who was now lying perfectly still, the bear still chewing away at his head. Rose immediately gave "Caleb" another shot, and succeeded this time in putting a ball through his lungs, and the bear at once commenced throwing up huge mouthfuls of blood nearly deluging the head and shoulders of Mark. Rose now caught his companion by the legs and drew him out of the dying bear's reach.

"Are you dead, Mark?" inquired Rose, when to that gentleman's astonishment, Mark replied in rather a feeble voice:

"Purty near, I tell ye now. My head's all chawed up, an' my skull's cracked all to flinders!" Rose then led up the horses, and contrived to get Mark on one of them, but the poor fellow was too badly hurt to sit alone.

Taking both rifles, Rose got on behind Mark, so as to be able to hold him on, and leading his own horse, they started slowly for camp. Finding that Mark was likely to give out before reaching it, Rose endeavored to excite him by giving him a good scolding. He told him he had no more "grit" about him than an old squaw to let the bear handle him so roughly when he had a good knife in his hand. "Why the devil didn't you cut him all to pieces," said Rose, "and not lay there yellin' like a baby and doin' nothin!"

Thomas Fitzpatrick

"I couldn't help it," replied Mark; "when 'Caleb' gets his claws onto a feller, he's a goner, an' no mistake." Rose then asked him why he quit yelling, and laid so still.

"Well," replied Mark, "I've always hearn tell if ye lay quite still, an' the bear thinks yer dead, he won't be apt to hurt yer, so I thought I'd try it on, although every time he bit I heard my skull crackin'."

Rose contrived, however, to get his patient safely to camp. On examination the hurt appeared not so bad as was supposed. Although the skull was badly scratched and chewed, it was found not to be broken, and in a few days Mark was able to be about again.[90]

As the rendezvous was breaking up on July 24, 1836, Osborne Russell was assigned to a small trapping party sent by Jim Bridger to work the Yellowstone Lake country. The men trapped the streams around the lake and then pushed down Yellowstone River, working the numerous small tributaries. On September 2, Russell was trapping on the Yellowstone River a few miles upstream from the mouth of the Stillwater River. He commented in his journal on the large number of grizzlies in the area due to the abundance of the wild fruit which grew along the river. [44]

2d-Traveled down the Yellowstone River about twenty miles. This is a beautiful country, the large plains widely extending on either side of the river, intersected with streams and occasional low spurs of mountains, whilst thousands of buffaloes may be seen in almost every direction, and deer, elk and grizzly bear are abundant. The latter are more numerous than in any other part of the mountains, owing to the vast quantities of cherries, plums and other wild fruits which this section of the country affords. In going to visit my traps, a distance of three or four miles, early in the morning, I have frequently seen seven or eight standing about the clumps of cherry bushes on their hind legs, gathering cherries with surprising dexterity, not even deigning to turn their grizzly heads to gape at the passing trapper, but merely casting a sidelong glance at him without altering their position.[91]

Jim Bridger's trapping party worked the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri River until late October, 1836, and then trapped the headwaters of the Snake River until they divided their forces to prepare for winter quarters. Isaac Rose and a portion of the Bridger party traveled to the Snake River plains near Fort Hall to establish their winter camp. There was ample food for the stock along the river and the climate was mild, but the game was very scarce due to the proximity of the fort. Often hunters tried for several days to find game but returned empty-handed. Rose was one of these hunters. On one hunting trip, he encountered a grizzly, an encounter which disrupted his hunt and cost him his rifle. [45]

One morning Rose, mounted on a mule, was slowly wending his way up one of the streams a few miles from camp, in the hopes of falling in with a deer or buffalo. As he was crossing a little knoll he saw, about two hundred yards ahead of him, a large grizzly, and not wishing to lose the opportunity of making four dollars, the sum paid for the skins, he determined to try a shot at "Caleb." Hitching his mule in a grove of pine bushes, he moved slowly and cautiously toward the bear until he reached a small clump of willows about fifty yards from the animal, who was standing with his head turned away and in the right position for a good shot. Rose's first care was to look around for some tree into which he could climb if his shot did not prove successful. About ten yards from him were two tall, slim cottonwoods growing close together, and up either of which he would be able to climb out of the bear's reach if necessary. Feeling now that he had a safe retreat within reach, he raised his rifle and

took deliberate aim, but just as he pulled the trigger the bear suddenly turned towards him, and the ball, instead of entering a vital part, struck him in the shoulder. Seeing that his shot was unsuccessful Rose made for the cottonwoods, and immediately climbed one of them, and "Caleb" catching sight of him, rushed savagely toward him. Rose had dropped his rifle, and this the bear instantly seized, and in two minutes had the stock chewed all to pieces. He then made for the cottonwoods, and raising himself on his hind legs tried to reach Rose. Finding this could not be done, he wedged himself between the two saplings, which were about two feet apart, and placing his back against one, he pushed his immense paws against the other with all his might. The saplings being slim bent fearfully, and Rose fancied he heard the one on which he was perched beginning to crack, and had about concluded it was all over for him, when by good fortune the back of the bear slipped off the sapling against which he was pressing, and he fell to the ground. This so demoralized him that he at once gave up the contest, making his way slowly up the stream, and was soon lost in the bushes.

Rose descended from his sapling, and picking up his now useless rifle, he mounted his mule and started for camp, rejoicing at his fortunate escape. This little affair cost him a new rifle.[92]

Osborne Russell spent the winter of 1837–38 on the Powder River. On March 25, the trappers, under the command of Jim Bridger, prepared for the spring hunt. The men set out on the twenty-ninth, working down the Powder and crossing overland to the "Little Horn River," *arriving on April 18. The following day the trappers received their instructions from Captain Bridger and left the main camp, moving west to the Bighorn River. The men, divided into small groups, began to set their traps, and for several days worked the country between the Bighorn and the west fork of Pryor's Creek. The main camp arrived on the twenty-sixth and, finding the men camped together, raised their traps and moved west. On the thirtieth, while preparing to set traps on Rocky Fork, Russell and his Canadian companion had an unusual encounter with a grizzly.* [46]

The next morning we made another start, as formerly. My intentions were to set my traps on Rocky Fork, which we reached about three o'clock p.m., our party having diminished to three men beside myself. In the meanwhile it began to rain and we stopped to approach a band of buffaloes, and as myself and one of my comrades (a Canadian) were walking along,

half bent, near some bushes, secreting ourselves from the buffalo, a large grizzly bear, which probably had been awakened from his slumbers by our approach, sprang upon the Canadian, who was five or six feet before me, and placing one fore paw upon his head, and the other on his left shoulder, pushed him to one side about twelve feet with as little ceremony as if he had been a cat, still keeping a direct course as though nothing had happened. I called to the Canadian and soon found the fright exceeded the wound, as he had received no injury except what this impudent stranger had done by tearing his coat, but it was hard telling which was the most frightened, the man or the bear.[93]

In November of 1840, Osborne Russell was trapping in the Portneuf and Bear rivers area. On the fifteenth, the weather worsened and he decided to return to Fort Hall. Russell arrived at the fort on November 23, obtained some supplies, and set out for Cache Valley to trade with a camp of Snake Indians. He remained with them until December 15 and then removed to Salt Lake to spend the rest of the winter at the mouth of the "Weavers River" *(Weber River). On February 15, Russell left his camp en route to* "Eutaw" *(Utah) Valley to trade with the Eutaw Indians encamped near the lake. He remained with them until March 27 and then returned to Fort Hall. On September 15, Russell and a companion set out from the fort to trap on the Blackfoot River, returning November 5. Soon after their arrival, Russell and a few companions decided to trap at the headwaters of the Portneuf River. Russell recorded how the country had changed. The beaver and buffalo were gone and it was time for the white men to leave. While out hunting mountain sheep near the Portneuf, Russell had his last encounter with a grizzly.* [47]

On the 15th of November I started up a high mountain in search of sheep. After hunting and scrambling over the rocks for half a day without seeing any traces of sheep I sat down upon a rock which overlooked the country below me. At length, casting a glance along the south side of the mountain, I discovered a large grizzly bear sitting at the mouth of his den. I approached within about 180 paces, shot and missed him. He looked around and crept slowly into his den. I reloaded my rifle, went up to the hole and threw down a stone weighing five or six pounds into the den, stepped back two or three steps and prepared myself for the outcome. The stone had scarcely reached the bottom when the bear came rushing out, with his mouth wide open, and was on the point of making

a spring at me when I pulled trigger and shot him through the left shoulder, which sent him rolling down the mountain. It being near night, I butchered him and left the meat lying and returned to camp.[94]

In the latter part of May, 1842, Alexander Culbertson, commander of Fort Union, the American Fur Company trading post, sent Charles Larpenteur to the mouth of the Rosebud River to take charge of Fort Van Buren. Larpenteur had been employed by the American Fur Company for almost ten years and this was his first opportunity to command a post. The only noteworthy event that took place at the fort during his stay was an incident involving a Mexican and a grizzly. [48]

Nothing of importance occurred during the time I remained at this place except one little incident, which I think deserves a place in this narrative. Two or three weeks after the boat left, a certain Mexican, who had been employed at Fort Union, made his appearance with his squaw nearly naked, and said to me, "Mr. Larpenteur, I will tell you the truth. I killed a squaw at the meat camp. I did not intend to kill her; but she made me mad. I took a stick, struck her on the back of the head, and she fell dead. I then ran off, fearing some of her connections, who were in camp. That is the whole truth, captain"--as he called me. "Now I am very poor," he continued, "and my India"--as he called his squaw--"is going to have a child. Will you please let me go into your fort? I will do anything you want me to do." Having but four men with me, all told, and seeing the Mexican so pitiable, I allowed him to come in. Mexicans being only fit to herd horses, I employed him on horseguard. Had his India not been with him and so near confinement, I would not have given him that employment. For a while he did very well, being attentive to his duties, and all were pleased with him. One fine afternoon he came to me, saying, "My horses are all doing well. I have got them in a good safe place. Will you be so kind as to let me go with my India in search of some pomme blanch?" which is the French name for Indian turnips [*Psoralea esculenta*]. As he had done so well and his India was so near her time, I consented, and off he started, assuring me that he would not be gone more than a couple of hours. But that time passed, and neither the Mexican nor his India appeared; and some of the men said they should not wonder if he had made his escape. This being the general impression, they examined a little old

box in which he kept his duds and found it empty. I immediately sent after the horses, which we supposed he had mounted, but found them all right. Next morning, knowing the situation of his squaw, and thinking that he might be lurking around for a chance to steal horses, I sent my hunter and an old Crow in search of the Mexican, under promise of $10 reward if they should find him. About 3 p.m. I saw them returning; the old Indian having the squaw behind him on his horse, with the child in her arms, and the Mexican trotting behind with nothing on but his shirt--thus all ready to be tied up to the flagstaff. This was immediately done, and he would have received a good dose, had not he begged so hard and looked so pitiable that he was let go unpunished. They had found him about 10 miles below the fort on the banks of the Yellowstone, where he had made a raft to cross over; but the raft, not being well constructed, came apart when in the middle of the river, and he lost all his duds except his shirt in saving his squaw, who, he said, had her child immediately on landing, the fright having hurried the birth. I pitied the squaw, but the Mexican I determined to ship off. So the next morning I gave him a skin boat, a little dried buffalo meat, a knife, a steel for striking fire, and a fish-hook and line, with which I told him to clear out and never make his appearance at this place again.

Not long after this occurrence Mr. Auguste Chouteau arrived with the outfit for the Crows, also bringing back the Mexican and his lady. On reprimanding him for so doing, he told me that he could not well help it, considering the situation in which he had found them. It had happened that the Mexican, on his way down river, saw a buffalo mired near the bank; and, having no meat, thought this would be a good opportunity to lay in a supply. Judge of his surprise when Mr. Bruin, who was lying in wait behind the buffalo, made a grab at the man, tearing him so badly that, when he was met by Mr. Chouteau, he was scarcely expected to live. Thus ends the story of the Mexican, except that, some time afterward, he was killed by the relations of the squaw he had murdered at Union.[95]

In 1835, Dick Wootton traveled with a supply train from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. When the caravan reached Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, Wootton decided to stay, and during the next three years he was involved in several trapping and trading expeditions throughout the Southwest. By 1838, he was a seasoned veteran. He became the chronicler of a 5000-mile round-trip expedition to the Pacific Northwest. When he returned to Bent's Fort two years later,

he found the price of beaver so low he hired out to Bent and St. Vrain to supply buffalo meat for the men at the fort. During these years at Fort Bent he and his companions had several encounters with grizzly bears. Wootton finally settled in New Mexico, and while he hunted in the Raton Mountains, an encounter with a grizzly almost cost him his life. [49–53]

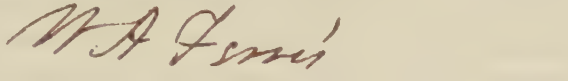
One of the most desperate encounters I ever had personal knowledge of between the trappers and a "grizzly", was one in which "Dick" Owens, who afterward became somewhat noted as a guide and scout, and John Burris, who, when I last saw him, was a California ranchman, were the participants.

They were out hunting one day and came upon an enormous "grizzly" very unexpectedly. Both the hunters shot at him and both missed. Before the smoke of their rifles cleared away the bear charged on them and they made for a small bushy cedar tree, hardly more than a shrub, which was the only tree in sight. Owens was ahead and got into the tree, but Burris had hardly gotten off the ground when the bear caught him by one foot and dragged him back. He was a man of rare presence of mind, however, and as soon as the bear caught hold of him he dropped to the ground, and notwithstanding the fact that his body was being scratched and torn in a score of places he lay perfectly still.

The enraged bear, thinking he had disposed of one of his enemies, left Burris and climbed into the bush after Owens, who had thrown away his gun and could do nothing but engage in a hand-to-hand fight with old Bruin. He struck at the bear with his hunting knife, but the brute caught him by the hand, and then a terrific struggle commenced in the branches of the tree, ten or twelve feet from the ground. Burris, although he was badly wounded, had by this time gotten hold of and reloaded his gun, but it was some little time, an age it seemed to Owens, before he could get in a position to shoot at the bear without taking great chances on killing his companion, who was having a wrestling match with the animal in the tree top.

Finally he managed to send a bullet through the bear's body and the big brute dropped to the ground, almost tearing Owens' hand off before loosening its hold.

This shot was not fatal, but the bear left the two hunters and charged down through our camp, which was not far distant from the scene of the encounter. Several more shots were fired at him and we finally killed him, but both Owens and Burris were left badly crippled, and never entirely recovered.[96]



Early one morning I left my two companions in camp and started out to get some bear meat. I had not gone more than a hundred yards when I struck the trail of a "grizzly," and after following it about a hundred yards farther, through a thick growth of shrub oak which was about as high as my head, I stepped into a little open space and found my bear. I found him in company with four other bears, all full grown.

I was looking for bears, but I hadn't been appointed a delegate to a convention of "grizzlies" and I felt at once as though I was an intruder. If I had not attracted their attention I should have retired without making my presence known or interrupting their deliberations, but they had seen me as soon as I saw them.

I knew that to open hostilites would be suicidal, because while I might have killed one or two of the bears I should have been torn to pieces before the row was over, if it had once commenced. It was unsafe to retreat because a bear has no respect for a cowardly enemy, and so I concluded to stand still and give the "grizzlies" to understand that I didn't propose to commence a fuss.

They eyed me closely for about half a minute and then commenced growling savagely, first taking a few steps toward me and then walking back to where they started from, as though they were daring me to make any hostile demonstration or even to "come half way."

I didn't much like being bullied in that way, but I didn't allow my temper to get the better of my judgement. I stood perfectly still for about five minutes, when the bears seemed to reach the conclusion that they had no quarrel with me, and bringing the proceedings of their convention to an abrupt close they started off on a run in different directions.

I let them go without firing a shot. Their conduct had been much more genteel than I had expected it to be and I wasn't going to break the peace under the circumstances.

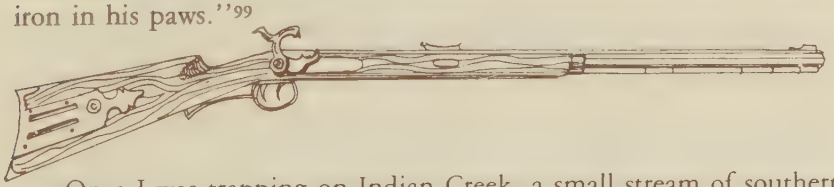
I think they were even more pleased at getting away from me than I was at getting rid of them. One of them, at least, must have been panic stricken, because he galloped away toward our camp and when he reached it was so much excited that he ran through the camp fire, scattering the sparks all over one of my companions who happened to be roasting a piece of venison at the time.

There is one thing which a "grizzly" resents very promptly and emphatically, and that is being shot at or threatened with a gun. He understands as well as anybody that the gun is a death-dealing weapon, and the snapping of the cap or the click of the hammer enrages him almost if not quite as much as being wounded. Under such circumstances he fights viciously and ferociously, without any further provocation.[97]

The hunter who took any unnecessary chances in dealing with a "grizzly" always regretted it. He always discovered that to trifle with the monarch of the mountains under any circumstances was a mistake. Old "Jim" Baker, who next to "Kit" Carson was General Fremont's most noted scout, and who has been my companion on many a trapping expedition, used to tell me how he learned this lesson very early in his experience as a mountaineer, and he would always wind up by remarking. "I haint forgot that lesson yet." Baker came to the mountains about the same time I did, and soon became known as one of the most daring fellows among the mountain men. Two or three years after he came to the country he and a companion ran across a couple of young "grizzlies" one morning, when they only happened to have with them the butcher knives sticking in their belts. It was not more than a hundred yards to the camp where their guns had been left, but, as Baker said afterwards. "I lowed we could get away with the varmints with our knives, and we sailed into the fight." Baker had a hard tussle with the bear which he attacked, but finally managed to kill him. Just about the time this contest ended he noticed that his companion had abandoned the fight, and the second bear charged him without stopping to give him a breathing spell or waiting for time to be called. The struggle which followed between the exhausted hunter and his second antagonist was a desperate one, and poor Baker was more dead than alive when he again found himself a victor. He could barely drag himself away from the two ferocious animals that he had slain in close combat, and he never again allowed himself to be inveigled into a rough and tumble fight with a "grizzly."[98]

It is probable Wootton's account of Jim Baker's battle with the two grizzly cubs is the same story told by Baker to Colonel Randolph B. Marcy.

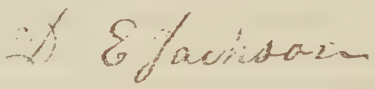
Jim Baker had been in at the death of many a grizzly bear, and related to me a number of thrilling accounts of his encounters with this formidable quadruped. On one occasion, while he was setting his traps, with a companion, on the head waters of Grand River, they came suddenly upon two young grizzly bears, about the size of well-grown dogs. He remarked to his friend that if they could "pitch in and skulp the varmints with their knives," it would be an exploit to boast of. They accordingly laid aside their rifles and "went in," Bridger attacking one and his companion the other. He says the bears immediately raised themselves upon their haunches, and were ready for the encounter. He ran around, endeavoring to get an opportunity to give a blow from behind with his long knife; but the young brute was too quick for him, and turned as he passed around so as always to confront him face to face. He knew if he came within reach of his paws that, although young, he could inflict a formidable blow; moreover, he felt great apprehensions that the piteous howls set up by the cubs would bring the infuriated dam to their rescue, when their chances for escape would be small. These thoughts passing rapidly through his mind made him exceedingly nervous, and anxious to terminate the combat as soon as possible. He made many desperate lunges at the bear, but the animal invariably warded them off with his fore paws like a pugilist, and protected his body at the expense of several severe cuts upon his legs. This, however, only served to exasperate him, and at length he took the offensive, and, with his mouth frothing with rage, he bounded toward Baker, who grappled with him and gave him a death-wound under the ribs. While all of this was going on his companion had been furiously fighting the other bear, and by this time had become greatly exhausted, and the odds were turning decidedly against him. He entreated Baker to come to his assistance at once, which he did; but, much to his astonishment, as soon as he entered the second contest his companion ran off, leaving him to fight the battle alone. He was, however, again victorious, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing his two antagonists stretched out lifeless before him; but he firmly resolved never again to make war on a bear with a hunting-knife, saying that he would "never fight narry nother grizzly without a good shootin-iron in his paws."[99]



Once I was trapping on Indian Creek, a small stream of southern Colorado, when our camp was visited one night by a "grizzly". A

companion named Kincaid slept under the same blanket with me that night, and about the middle of the night he awakened me out of a sound sleep by giving me a nudge in the ribs. He said something which I thought meant Indians, and pointed toward the foot of our "bunk". Not two yards from our feet I saw a black object which looked to me as tall as a telegraph pole. It was a bear, sitting upon his haunches, as they do sometimes, but I took it to be an Indian and the next thing I expected was to have a tomahawk hurled at my head. We always slept with our loaded guns at our side, in such a position that we could grab them instantly and in case of emergency shoot without getting on our feet. Without ever thinking of the thing being a bear, I raised my gun and fired.

As it happened, he fell backward over a little bank and then started off through the brush in an opposite direction from our camp. I had, however, given him his death wound, and he only went a short distance before he fell over a log, and we found him there dead in the morning. If my gun had happened to miss fire or if I had wounded instead of shooting the bear fatally I should probably have had as ugly a fight as a man ever had with a man bear, and I doubt very much whether I should be here now telling stories about my hunting adventures.[100]



I killed another bear under similar circumstances one night with my hunting knife. I was sleeping soundly when I felt the bear's cold nose rubbed against my face. My hunting knife was in my belt and when I awakened and found the bear standing alongside of me I drew the knife and plunged it into his side up to the hilt, springing away from him so quickly that I received but a slight scratch. The knife entered his heart and he fell dead on the spot where I had been sleeping a moment before.[101]

The closest call I ever had myself when hunting bears was not many years ago, and right here in the Raton Mountains.

Bears were beginning to get scarce in the country then, and I hadn't seen one for a long time. I had boys growing up and a good many men

about me who were doing different kinds of work, and every now and then some of them would come in and report that they had seen a bear.

I always laughed at them and teased them more or less about their reports, because I thought if there had been any bears in the neighborhood I should have caught a glimpse of one sometimes myself.

One morning I walked out with my gun on my shoulder, thinking I might see something to shoot at, and had not gone more than three or four hundred yards from my house when I came on to an old bear with two good-sized cubs. I thought to myself, "well, the boys were right, after all, and now I'll just teach them that the proper thing to do when you see a bear is to kill it." I calculated to kill the old bear and then capture the two cubs to raise as pets, just to show the travelers through the country what a live Rocky Mountain bear looked like. As I didn't often miss anything I shot at, I had every confidence in my ability to kill the bear at the first shot. For once, however, my confidence in the old rifle, which had served me so many good turns, was misplaced. A long period of idleness seemed to have impaired its usefulness. It missed fire, and the snapping of the cap made just noise enough to attract the attention of the bear. I had gotten so close that when the bear started for me I could only get out of the way by making for the nearest tree. I reached the tree with the bear in close pursuit, and commenced to climb. It was a small pine tree, and I had grown so stout that I weighed about two hundred and forty pounds, so you can understand that I couldn't climb like a squirrel, even under favorable circumstances. The dry pine limbs that I caught hold of broke under my weight, and when I got about four or five feet from the ground, not high enough to be out of reach of the bear by any means, there I stuck. I couldn't get up, and I needn't tell you that I didn't want to come down. I expected every minute that the bear would take a mouthful of me, but I commenced hunting for a pistol that I had about me and made up my mind to kill her if she bit a leg off. Just when I thought the biting and clawing was about to commence something frightened one of the cubs which the old bear had left behind when she started out to pay her compliments to me, and it set up that peculiar cry, which always makes one think of a child in distress. The old bear left me and ran to the cub, and then they made off together in the bushes. I didn't follow them, because I had seen enough to satisfy me that the bear had an ugly temper.

I really wanted those two cubs, but I didn't want them bad enough to try to get them that morning at the risk of another encounter with the old lady bear. I let myself down out of the tree, picked up my gun, and walked home. When they asked me what I had found that morning

in the way of game, I told them "nothing of consequence." I never said a word about my adventure with the bear, but some way or other the boys found out about it and for a while I had a hard time to live with them. Every once in a while they would want to know if I had seen any bears lately, and what I thought about there being any in the country.[102]

In 1857, Captain Randolph B. Marcy received orders to report to Colonel Albert S. Johnston at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Marcy found that he was one of several officers chosen to accompany the Utah expedition. In the winter of 1857–58, Marcy was ordered by Johnston to take a party of forty men and make a midwinter march to Fort Massachusetts, New Mexico, to obtain supplies and pack animals. In March of 1858, Marcy left New Mexico and traveled north along the eastern face of the Rocky Mountains. It was along this route between the forks of the Platte River that Marcy's first encounter with a grizzly did much to form his opinion regarding the ferociousness of the animal. [54–55]

Besides the common black bear of the Eastern States, several others are found in the mountains of California, Oregon, Utah, and New Mexico, viz., the grizzly, brown, and cinnamon varieties; all have nearly the same habits, and are hunted in the same manner.

From all I had heard of the grizzly bear, I was induced to believe him one of the most formidable and savage animals in the universe, and that the man who would deliberately encounter and kill one of these beasts had performed a signal feat of courage which entitled him to a lofty position among the votaries of Nimrod. So firmly had I become impressed with this conviction, that I should have been very reluctant to fire upon one had I met him when alone and on foot. The grizzly bear is assuredly the monarch of the American forests, and, so far as physical strength is concerned, he is perhaps without a rival in the world; but, after some experience in hunting, my opinions regarding his courage and his willingness to attack men have very materially changed.

In passing over the elevated table-lands lying between the two forks of the Platte River in 1858, I encountered a full-grown female grizzly bear, with two cubs, very quietly reposing upon the open prairie, several miles distant from any timber. This being the first opportunity that had ever occurred to me for an encounter with the ursine monster, and being imbued with the most exalted notions of the beast's proclivities for offensive warfare, especially when in the presence of her offspring, it may

Nathaniel Wyeth

very justly be imagined that I was rather more excited than usual. I, however, determined to make the assault. I felt the utmost confidence in my horse, as she was afraid of nothing; and, after arranging every thing about my saddle and arms in good order, I advanced to within about eighty yards before I was discovered by the bear, when she raised upon her haunches and gave me a scrutinizing examination. I seized this opportune moment to fire, but missed my aim, and she started off, followed by her cubs at their utmost speed. After reloading my rifle, I pursued, and, on coming again within range, delivered another shot, which struck the large bear in the fleshy part of the thigh, whereupon she set up a most distressing howl and accelerated her pace, leaving her cubs behind. After loading again I gave the spurs to my horse and resumed the chase, soon passing the cubs, who were making the most plaintive cries of distress. They were heard by the dam, but she gave no other heed to them than occasionally to halt for an instant, turn around, sit up on her posteriors, and give a hasty look back; but, as soon as she saw me following her, she invariably turned again and redoubled her speed. I pursued about four miles and fired four balls into her before I succeeded in bringing her to the ground, and from the time I first saw her until her death-wound, nowithstanding I was often very close upon her heels, she never came to bay or made the slightest demonstration of resistance. Her sole purpose seemed to be to make her escape, leaving her cubs in the most cowardly manner.

Jim Bridger

Upon three other different occasions I met the mountain bears, and once the cinnamon species, which is called the most formidable of all, and in none of these instances did they exhibit indication of anger, but invariably ran from me. While I was returning from New Mexico to Utah in 1858, I encountered a large gray bear, which I drove for two miles in the same manner that a wild cow is driven. I was well mounted, and could ride around the bear whenever I desired, and this enabled me to turn the animal in any direction, and thus I drove him directly back to the command, where he was killed.[103]

It is my opinion, from all I have seen of the grizzly bear, that if he gets the wind or sight of a man on horseback at any considerable distance, he will endeavor to get away as soon as possible. I am so fully impressed with this conviction, that I should hunt the animal (provided I was well mounted on a reliable horse) with a feeling of as much security as I would have in hunting the buffalo. My experience in hunting the grizzly bear differs materially from that of some of my acquaintances.

Joseph Gale

General Van Vliet, who at one time was stationed at Fort Laramie, was hunting in the Black Hills, when he suddenly came into close proximity with a large grizzly bear, and gave him a shot, wounding him in one of the fore legs. This only served to exasperate the animal, and, instead of running away, he took the offensive, and charged upon the general, who was mounted upon a good horse, but he had never before seen one of the hideous-looking monsters, and was so much terrified at his appearance that he became almost paralyzed, and could hardly move; and the most vigorous application of the spurs had no effect in accelerating his speed, until the bear came up and struck him in the buttock with one of his huge paws, which restored his powers of locomotion, and he bounded off with lightning speed, and carried his rider out of danger. The general subsequently killed the bear.[104]

Charles Larpenteur

Charles Larpenteur

James Baker

IN CALIFORNIA

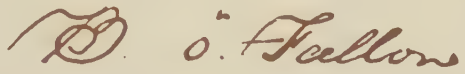
Jedediah Smith made his first trip to California in 1826. He left the Cache Valley rendezvous in July and arrived at the San Gabriel Mission in November. Because Smith was an American, Mexican officials forced him to leave California in January. He was ordered to take the same route by which he had entered. However, Smith went north to the Stanislaus River, where he spent the winter of 1826–27. In the spring he left his party under the command of Harrison Rogers, and taking two companions crossed the Sierras by way of Ebbetts Pass en route to the 1827 rendezvous. Smith promised Rogers that he would be back in four months with new recruits and supplies. He arrived at the Bear Lake rendezvous on July 3, and at the conclusion of the summer activities left for California. On September 18, Jedediah and only eight of his original eighteen companions arrived at the Stanislaus camp. Ten men had been killed by the Mohaves at the Colorado crossing. The Americans spent the closing months of 1827 near San Francisco Bay and on January 1, 1828, Smith and his party left for the Columbia River, trapping many streams as they traveled north. On March 8, Rogers wounded a brown bear along the Feather River. The following day, when Rogers was hunting for the wounded animal, the bear attacked and severely mauled him. On the evening of April 7, after shooting several grizzlies near the mouth of Deer Creek, Smith and his horse were attacked by a wounded grizzly. [1–2]

8th N NE 7 Miles I was under the necessity of travelling verry crooked to avoid the mud encamped on the smaller River to which I had not at that time applied a name. Opposite to my camp was an indian village and not far below one or two more Their Lodges were built like those of the Pawnees After we had encamped several of them came and sat on the bank opposite talking but in a language which I did not understand. On this river I found a plenty of Beaver sign. 13 were caught the first setting. Mr. Rodgers killed a Brown Bear and wounded another

March 9th Early in the morning Mr. Rodgers went after the wounded Bear in company with John Hanna. In a short time Hanna came running in and said that they had found the Bear in a verry bad thicket That he suddenly rose from his bed and rushed on them Mr. Rodgers fired a moment before the Bear caught him. After biting him in several places he

IN CALIFORNIA—1828–1857

went off but Hanna shot him again when he returned caught Mr. Rodgers and gave him several additional wounds. I went out with a horse to bring him in and found him verry badly wounded being severely cut in 10 or 12 different places I washed his wounds and dressed them with plasters of soap and sugar . . .
10th March Mr Rodgers wounds were verry painful. I dressed them frequently with cold water and salve of Sugar and Soap . . .[105]



7th April W N W 8 miles. At 2 Miles from camp crossed a creek 30 yards wide rapid and stoney Bottom running SW and having some Beaver sign. 3 Miles farther struck a creek same size and running S W but so deep that I was obliged to follow it up 3 miles to find a ford at which place I encamped. In the vicinity was considerable appearance of game and particularly bear. In the evening we shot several Bear and they ran into thickets that were convenient. Several of us followed one that was Badly wounded into a thicket. We went on foot because the thicket was too close to admit a Man on horse back.
As we advanced I saw one and shot him in the head when he immediately fell--Apparently dead. I went in to bring him out without loading my gun and when I arrived within 4 yards of the place where the Bear lay the man that was following me close behind spoke and said "He is alive" I told him in answer that he was certainly dead and was observing the one I had shot so intently that I did not see one that lay close by his side which was the one the man behind me had reference to. At that moment the Bear sprang towards us with open mouth and making no pleasant noise. Fortunately the thicket was close on the bank of the creek and the second spring I plunged head foremost into the water. The Bear ran over the man next to me and made a furious rush on the third man Joseph Lapoint. But Lapoint had by good fortune a Bayonet fixed on his gun and as the Bear came in reach he gave him a severe wound in the neck which induced him to change his course and run into another thicket close at hand. We followed him there and found another in company with him One of them we killed and the other went off Badly wounded. I then went on horse Back with two men to look for another that was wounded I rode up close to the thicket in which I supposed him to be and rode round it several times halloeing but without making any

discovery I rode up for a last look when the Bear Sprang for the horse. He was so close that the horse could not be got underway before he caught him by the tail. The Horse being strong and much frightened exetered himself so powerfully that he gave the Bear no opportunity to close uppon him and actually drew him 40 or 50 yards before he relinquished his hold. The Bear did not continue the pursuit but went off and was quite glad to get rid of his company on any terms and returned to camp to feast on the spoils and talk of the incidents of our eventful hunt. 16 Beaver taken[106]

George Yount arrived in California in 1831 and during the next two years traveled extensively and tried his hand at several different occupations. In 1833, while ascending the Sacramento River, he was shocked as he viewed the results of a cholera epidemic that had devastated the Indian communities the previous year. It was on this occasion that he found an Indian child in a nearby abandoned camp. Yount kept the child and continued north until he reached Petaluma, where he set up a permanent camp. He then visited the missions at Sonoma and San Rafael, where he was employed by Father Quijas to make the first wood shingles used in Alta, California, for repairs on the mission buildings. While working at the missions, Yount maintained his camp at Petaluma. Yount spent the years of 1833–35 with his friends Galant Vallejo and Father Quijas at the Sonoma Mission. It was through their friendship and political connections that Yount was able to procure a grant for two leagues of land on the Caymus ranch in Napa Valley. Early in the spring of 1836, Yount removed to his property to begin improvements and found that his greatest annoyance was the California grizzly. In 1859, The Hesperian *quoted Yount as he reminisced upon those early days at his ranch:*

> they were everywhere--upon the plains, in the valleys, and on the mountains, venturing even within the camping-grounds, so that I have often killed as many as five or six in one day, and it was not unusual to see fifty or sixty within the twenty-four hours. [3–4]

They soon found the grizzly Bear very numerous and bold at their encampment. One night, they had left the offal of a deer, which they had shot in the afternoon, near the camp. In the darkness of midnight, one of these monsters came and was making a hearty meal from this offal of the deer. He might, with almost equal ease, have taken the little girl, for she was lying on her pallet in the boat near by. The boat was one of those light ones, built of Sea Elephant hides, which we have

He was so close that the horse could not be got underway
before he caught him by the tail

described above and could, with ease be transported from place to place. As the monster was leisurely feeding, one of the party, suddenly awaking uttered a loud cry, at which he took fright and ran. But Yount, who by a life long practice had come to awake quickly, and with remarkable selfpossession, instantly, with his rifle, brought him down. He was a very large animal, and it must be regarded as accidental, that in the darkness or rather only by the light of the moon, he should strike a vital part. There are only two points where a rifle bullet will, at the first shot, prove fatal to this animal. One of which is directly under the ear, and the other directly back of the fore leg, and very low because the heart of the monster lies much lower than in most animals of his dimensions.[107]

The first enterprise before him was to prepare timber and erect a strong and substantial blockhouse for protection and defence. He accordingly selected his site and entered the forest within a few yards of his tent and was saluted with a Grizzly Bear apparently the great Father of the herd. The monster was lying on a bed of leaves, under a wide spreading Oak, which he was about to fell for blocks with which to build for himself a castle. The animal rose upon his haunches, excedingly fat and clumsy, much resembling in locomotion some large well fatted swine in the sty of a New England farmer. He seemed indifferent to Yount's intrusion, doubtless anticipating no more than a hasty retreat, such as he had been accustomed to witness when met by a strolling Indian. The savages were always accustomed to give these animals "a wide berth," and to deem themselves fortunate to be allowed a hasty retreat. They then had no fire arms, and their arrows, although effective and fatal to all other living beings of the country, were hardly equal to the task of an open encounter with this sovereign of the forest. This was doubtless a veteran, and had long roamed the mountains of California, but he discovered something new in Yount's address, and saluted him with one of his most hideous growls, and opened his terrific jaws, as if to show that there was room within for the accomodation of any gentlemen of Yount's dimensions. It was not long however before he was greeted with a salutation from that rifle, which never failed to give satisfactory account of its mission. The animal fell and as it was the first produce of his farm, Yount had the curiosity to ascertain its weight, which was found to exceed Fifteen

hundred pounds. Yount had seen many large animals of the species, but this greatly surpasses them all. On farther investigation it was found that not only must Yount guard himself against the numerous hoards of savages, but could hardly at any time go out upon his farm, or pass from place to place without meeting these monsters. He therefore provided a sure footed horse, on which he might always depend, and never allowed himself to go out except upon this animal with rifle in hand; and he also resolved, in every instance to destroy these Bears whenever he might meet them. This was not a difficult task, as they would rarely flee from him, and were not sufficiently fleet on foot to run with the horse.[108]

Zenas Leonard left the Green River rendezvous on July 24, 1833, as the clerk to Joseph Walker's California expedition. The party arrived at the mission of San Juan Bautista on November 24, where Walker decided to make winter camp. On December 18, Walker, Leonard, and two companions left the mission to explore the surrounding country. They arrived at the Carmel Mission on Christmas Day and at the capital city of Monterey three days later. On January 2, Leonard's party left Monterey en route to San Juan Bautista and arrived "finding everything in good order, and all well except one man named Philips, who was laying in a very precarious state from wounds inflicted by a bear." *While traveling from Monterey to their winter encampment Leonard and his companions had the chance to witness a form of gambling among the Mexicans called* "bull-bating." *After spending about two months at the mission, Walker decided to take his men east to the Sulphur River to await their return to the Rocky Mountains in the spring. This location afforded the men excellent hunting along the many streams of the central valley and, unfortunately, several confrontations with the California grizzly.* [5–8]

It appeared that Philips had been out hunting deer, and having killed one, took out the insides and hung it upon a tree, and started to the camp to get a horse to bring it home. After traveling a mile or so, whilst ascending a hill, came suddenly upon an old bear and two cubs.--The bear immediately on seeing Philips, as is their custom, reared on her hind feet, and being very close, commenced growling most furiously. This our hero could not brook, and fearing the consequences if he should shoot and wound her, lost his presence of mind, and started to run.--The bear immediately pursued and caught him. He now found it quite useless to attempt to get loose, and only saved his life by sinking to the ground

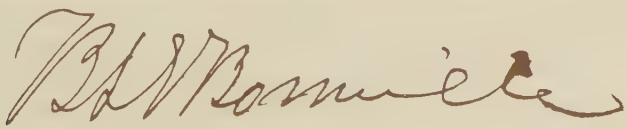
and affecting to be dead. The bear then left him, but not without wounding him to such a degree that it was a long time before he could collect strength enough to raise to his feet. It was late at night when he reached the camp, and was so far gone, from hunger & loss of blood, that his life was despaired of at first. One of his arms was broke & his body most shockingly cut and mangled.[109]

On our way from the Capitol to our camp, we had an opportunity of witnessing a part of the Spanish mode of gambling in this country, which was rare amusement to us, and which they call bull-bating. It is in this fashion, as near as I could understand: When a number of sporting gentlemen get together for this purpose, they repair to the prairies, all well mounted and prepared for the chase. When they come across a herd of cattle they make large bets on who shall be the first to noose one of the cattle in the drove in sight. When every thing is arranged this far, they all take an even start. The one that gets the rope round the animals horn or neck first claims the assistance of the rest to throw the animal to the ground--which ends the chase for this time. As the Spaniards are generally skilled in the art of throwing the noose, the chase in a case of this kind mostly depends on the fleetness of the horses. When they have secured a bull in this way, they take him to a pen made strong for this purpose, where they put him in for safe-keeping, and settle the bets. Having got through with this game, to give the loosers an opportunity to regain their losses, they start out on the hunt of a grizzly bear, always prefering the largest, which they capture in the same way. Taking a bear is a much more dangerous piece of work, than any other animal, owing to their enormous strength. It often happens that, in taking a bear, they are unhorsed; when, if alone, they are in imminent danger of being torn to pieces; but this seldom happens unless the horse is thrown, or the saddle tore loose. In taking a bear, their object is to noose him round one of the hind legs, in order to keep him from biting the cord, which they are very apt to do if fast round the neck. A single hunter can do but little with a large bear, and they are seldom attacked single handed, or without the certainty of assistance from some of their comrades. When overtaken by the foremost rider, the bear stops running & prepares for war. This man will then engage the attention of the bear by teasing him,

whilst another hunter will come up in the rear of the excited animal and noose him by the hind foot; when the cord is securely fastened to the hind foot, he is generally considered safe. It is then that their sport begins in good earnest, and the feats that are sometimes performed by the men, bear and horses, would be incredible to any person who has never seen any sport of this kind. After the bear finds himself secure and has become pretty well worried, he seats himself sullenly on the ground and lets the horse pull at the cord, stretching his leg out until the pain becomes too severe, when he will draw up his leg, horse and all, with as much apparent ease as a horse would a sleigh. I have been told that some of the largest bears have been known to drag two horses a considerable distance in a fit of rage, in spite of all the exertions of the horses and riders to the contrary. After the bear is pretty well worried in this way, another noose is fastened round one of the fore feet or neck, when the bear will commence beating the ground with his feet and manifesting the most intense rage and anger imaginable--and in this manner they drag, whip and coax him along to the pen where the bull is confined.

Their cords are made of green cow-hide, which they cut into narrow strips, hang them in the sun and rub them as they dry, making them soft and pliable, when they are platted into a rope which no weight can sever.

When the bear has arrived at the bull pen, their bets on taking him and all disputes are settled, refreshments taken, and preparations made for another scene, which is by far the most pleasing to the Spaniards. They begin to enrage the bull by pricking him with a nail fixed in the end of a stick, and when his anger has rose to the war pitch, the bear is let into the pen with the bull. The men now bet all they are worth on which will be the conquerer, and every thing manifests the greatest possible excitement. Sometimes the animals refuse to fight until they are forced to it by being tormented with the sharpened sticks, but when one receives a blow from the other, nothing can part them until one or the other falls. These fights last sometimes half an hour without relaxation. The bear is much the strongest, but it has no chance of avoiding the thrusts of the bull, in consequence of the smallness of the pen; but in an open field, a grizzly bear will conquer a bull in a few moments.[110]



On the 20th, it being a fine day for hunting, a large portion of our sportsmen set out early in the morning bound for a general hunt, and determined to rake the whole prairie. Towards the middle of the day, two of the men came in sight of a large drove of elk, feeding in the open prairie, and as they were cautiously approaching near enough to shoot, they unexpectedly came upon five grizzly bear that were sleeping in the grass--two old ones and three cubs; the latter began to howl most piteously, which enraged the old ones, and they made at our hunters with open mouth. But as one of them was an old practitioner in such matters, having a good gun, carrying an ounce ball, which he called *"Knock-him-stiff,"* stood quite composed (bidding his companion, who was about to run, to stand his ground) until the bear came within reach of him when he discharged it with the muzzle in her mouth--which, as our hero said, gave her a very bad cough. This inspired the other hunter with courage, and he treated the other bear in nearly the same manner. The cubs not showing any desire to depart alone, were also killed. This days hunt was exceedingly lucky, not only to these two men, but to nearly all who were out, as they all returned with heavy loads of game.[111]

26th. To-day about 10 o'clock, we discovered a large drove of horses passing through the plain, followed by a few people, whom we supposed to be Spaniards or Indians--but they did not appear to know that we were in the neighborhood, & we were not anxious to let them know it for fear they might *travel* our way some time. In the evening, as some of our men who had been out hunting, were returning home, they accidentally came across a large bear laying in a hole, sound asleep. Our men were anxious to see some sport, and commenced making a noise, and even fired a gun or two without bringing her to her senses, and getting her out of the hole. They then dismounted, stationed themselves around the hole and shot her before she moved. On examination, they found her to be of the grizzly species and of the largest size; and also having two young ones in the hole with her, not larger than a common sized cat. The old one was extremely fat, and from the signs about the hole, it appeared that she must have had this as a permanent place of residence. It is the first instance I ever knew of taking a bear of this size whilst asleep.[112]

Randolph B. Marcy

In 1823, James Clyman was hired by William H. Ashley as a clerk to accompany the supply boats up the Missouri River. He was a participant in the Arikara Indian campaign during the summer of 1823 and, in September, accompanied Jedediah Smith overland to winter with the Crow Indians in the Wind River Valley. After four years of mountain life, Clyman returned to St. Louis in 1827. Clyman drifted for the next few years and worked various jobs in several different cities. Because of bad health, he decided to join an emigrant train headed for Oregon in 1844, where he spent the winter in the vicinity of Fort Vancouver. In the spring of 1845, Clyman captained a wagon train to Monterey, California, and in August visited with George Yount at his ranch in Napa Valley. On August 15, Clyman left Yount's ranch and traveled to Mr. Kelsey's hunting camp a few miles up Napa Creek to enjoy some hunting. [9]

Got a horse of Mr Kelsey and rode out after Breakfast to see what game might be seen after rideing in the hills some 2 miles and starting several deer whuch ran off I discovered two deer lying under the shade of a Tree dismounted and in aproching them one of them discovered me and sprang to his feet I brought my rifle to bear on him and fired he sprang off in greate haste and in a fuw bounds was out of sight reloded and as the other was not alarmed I crawled nigher and rising

to my feet I distinctly saw his Eears and one eye taking deliberate aim for his eye I pulld trigger the deer sprang and bounded End wise side ways & in fact in all directions haveing his brains shot out Reloded and walked over the ridge to see what had bcome of the other I heard a desperate screaming and squalling in that direction and on a nerer approach a discovered a large she Bear had got my deer in possession and the squalling proceeded from three others Two cubs and a yearling which ware contending for a portion of the venison the old she snapping and Boxing them whenever they approached she soon turned the vital part of her front to me and the keen crack of my rifle told her the tale of death The others not at all intimidated soon fell to tearing devouring and Quarelling over the carcase of the deer again I soon ramed down another ball and taking aim at the yearling brought her to the earth with many a growl and struggle she died tearing the brush with her teeth and claws I then laid down my rifle as the cubs had become frightned and fled into the brush in walking down to whare the farthest one lay however the cubs raised the yell and came back in Quest of their dam and I had to give way and give them a free passage I thought however I could frighten them and cutting a good cudgel advanced on them in turn but they gave every symtom of fight short of laying hold of me and I had to retreat the second time as soon as an oppertunity occurred I caught my rifle again and promised distruction to the intire family of bears but in my greate hury to load I put down a ball without powder and after several fruitless attempts to kill the cubs I was forced from the field of battle and left the bears in full possession of the venison.[113]

In May 1830, George Nidever left Fort Smith, Arkansas, en route to Taos, New Mexico, arriving in November. Nidever spent the following year trapping in the Green River Valley. At the conclusion of the spring hunt, he attended the 1832 rendezvous in Pierre's Hole. The following year he was present at the Green River rendezvous, where he joined Joseph Walker's California-bound company. In the spring of 1834, Walker and his men returned to the mountains, but Nidever decided to remain. He soon made the acquaintance of George Yount, who introduced him to the hunting of sea otter. Nidever quickly adapted and became so efficient that he continued to be involved in the industry the rest of his life. During the year of 1836, Nidever was instrumental in giving valuable assistance to Governor Alvarado. To show his appreciation,

the Governor suggested that Nidever select some land for a ranch and the Governor would make the necessary arrangements to secure the title. During the following year Nidever spent several months and a large sum of money traveling throughout the San Luis Obispo area selecting a site. But when he notified the Governor of his choice, he was informed that the laws concerning this type of matter had been changed and that no further action could be taken. It was during those days in the vicinity of San Luis Obispo that Nidever had several encounters with grizzlies and recorded his impressions of the animal. Another incident took place a few years later while he was encamped at Tomales Bay. Nidever and three hunting companions were traveling from Fort Ross to Monterey when Redding McCoy was attacked and seriously injured by a grizzly. [10–11]

At this time game was very plenty in San Luis Obispo Co. especially deer and grizzly bear. Of the latter I killed 45 this year [*1837*]. The natives hunted them occasionally but for their mode of hunting, with the lasso, required open ground, while the grizzly seldom left the thickets and timber. Here I had several adventures with bear, My horse, which I usually rode, was a large, powerful one. One day while riding through a dense thicket not far from Branch's ranch, a she bear with two yearlings sprang upon us, so near that my horse barely had time to jump one side, turn and dash out of the thicket. All this the horse did of his own accord, as I did not see the bears at that moment. I attempted to control him but found it impossible, as the bears were so close behind that I think for a moment the old one had hold of his tail. Just before the horse reached the clearing he ran under an oak tree whose lower limbs knocked me off, one of them hitting me in the forehead and almost knocking me insensible. I laid perfectly quite where I fell and all three of the bears rushed past me so close that I could have touched them. I lost no time in getting up a tree knowing that they would soon return. Having followed the horse to the edge of the thicket they turned back snuffing and grunting until they reached my tracks which they soon followed to the tree. Looking up the tree, they discovered me and raised up on their hind legs, growling fiercely and scratching the bark off.

They soon left me and went back into the middle of the thicket. I returned to the ranch procured another horse and some dogs and returned. I found my horse about a half a mile from this thicket. A Mexican had come with me so after finding my horse we returned to the thicket. We made the dogs go in and followed with our horses a short distance. The bears chased us out into the open ground. We repeated this until I got

a good chance and killed one of the young ones. I did not dare attack the old one as my horse was almost unmanageable through fright, he having been chased and nearly caught once before by a grizzly, and besides I was still suffering from several bad bruises and cuts on my head and face. I could have shot one of them while I was in the tree but was afraid that the others would climb after me. About two mos. after this affair, I discovered the old one and remaining cub one day eating acorns. when creeping upon them I shot the old one first and then the cub. I knew the old one by its having one short ear. Another day having seen fresh tracks I followed them down into a hollow with a thick strip of Willows running through it. I had almost reached them when I saw four full grown bears. I quietly turned about and rode back. They saw me and set up a loud grunting but did not attempt to follow neither did I care to go after them. Mr Branch had been chased several times by grizzlies narrowly escaping them so that his wife was very much exercised over my persistent hunting of them. She was continually cautioning me about exposing myself. I shot that year as before stated 45 grizzlies not counting those that got away in the brush most of them no doubt fataly wounded but one of my rules was never to go into a thicket if I knew it contained a bear. I killed some very large ones and one in particular whose skin I sold to one of the trading vessels. It was much larger than any bullock's hide they took on board. My mode of hunting the grizzly was this. If I discovered them feeding I rode as near as possible with my horse keeping always to leeward; then dismounting I tied him with a small cord which he could easily break if the bear got after him. I then approached the bear cautiously and under cover if practicable, taking advantage of the ground, timber, &c. I would get as near as 40 to 50 yds. and under no circumstances did I shoot at a longer distance than 100 yds. I never shot at the head as unless a ball could be put fairly in the eye or ear, the constant motion of the head when feeding and its shape make the glancing off of the bullet almost certain. The breast is a good place to aim at if the bear is facing you, but I prefer the side, just back of the fore shoulder. The aim should be at a spot well back of the shoulder as a bear's heart lies much farther back than that of a deer or buffalo. Here a shot is almost sure to drop a bear dead in his tracks sometimes they will run a few yards, but very rarely do they move from where they are shot. One objection to shooting them in the breast is the danger of striking some of the larger bones against which the bullet flattens. On the side the ribs are the only bones and they are easily broken or even pierced by an ordinary sized bullet. If I approached them through timber I always looked about me

before firing and selected a tree that I could redily climb in case of need. When feeding they are easily approached, by keeping to leeward, as although their scent is extraordinary, they keep no watch; relying no doubt upon their poweress.

When a she bear with cubs is found, it is best to shoot the old one first and the young ones can be shot at leisure as they will not leave the mother. I never shot at a bear unless I could see him plainly and was within good range, and in this way I never missed one. In a thicket a bear has one most decidedly at a disadvantage, and under no circumstances should they be followed however severely wounded. If a person is cool, a good shot and above all prudent, there is but little danger in hunting bears. Most of those I shot this year and in fact at all times, I killed almost as easily as I could a squirrel. A person who is not a good shot, cool, and cautious, and has a good rifle has no business to hunt bears. Nowadays with the magazine and breech-loading guns bear hunting is very tame. In my time we had only muzzle loaders and although by carrying two guns, we had a reserve shot, our chances were poor if a wounded bear got after us. It will sometimes happen that, in passing through bushes one comes suddenly upon a bear and then of course his chances are poor. When a grizzly is lying in a thicket and hears a noise they keep perfectly quiet until the animal or person is within reach. At this time there was no sale for bear skins so that we never took the trouble to skin them unless for our own use or to make a present to some friend or acquaintance. Sparks killed very few bears, but he got chased by one once, and had such a narrow escape that I could never prevail upon him afterward to hunt them. In fact he became so much afraid of them, that when we were together in a bear country he would never leave me and often prevented me from shooting when I had a good chance at one

Why a man who is a good shot should be afraid of a bear under ordinary circumstances I cannot imagine, yet my experience has been that very few even among hunters care to hunt the grizzly much. There are plenty who will talk about what they would do but they will run when it comes to the point. I think I must have killed, on this Coast, at different times, upwards of 200 grizzlies. While at Branch's Ranch I usually hunted alone, but on one trip took with me an American, a young man, green, awkward, from New England I think, who had been cast away on a whaler somewhere along the Coast, and was then in the employ of Branch as a laborer, or ranch hand. He was no more afraid of a grizzly than of a sucking calf, it was not

Frederick A. Wislizenus

courage however but stupidity. Having killed several deer about six miles from the Ranch, and knowing they were short of meat I decided to send my companion in with some venison.

We had made a camp from which a plain trail lead to the ranch. Loading his horse with meat I started him off with the instruction to keep to the trail and to hasten forward as fast as possible in order to reach the ranch before nightfall. The next day while out hunting I found him wandering about on foot, and completely lost. Shortly after leaving camp the day before he found a large tree fallen across the trail and thinking to make a short cut to the Ranch he left the trail and struck out in the direction he supposed the ranch lay. Night came on and he could see no ranch. He wandered about until the horse gave out when he abandoned it and continued his search for the ranch on foot. So he continued to wander all that night and the next day up to the time I found him. A short distance off we found the horse quietly grazing; the meat still lashed to her. How either of them missed being caught by grizzlies I cannot imagine. We were in the very worst grizzly country in Cal. and the horse with fresh venison would have proved a dainty morsel for them. I asked the New Englander why he did not go around the tree and continue to follow the trail. He looked a little surprised and foolish and finally said that he might have done that but at that the time it had not occurred to him. Not long after this I went out to hunt one morning leaving him alone in camp.

Upon returning I found a large grizzly walking leisurely around the camp, pausing occasionally to stand up and watch the New Englander who was seated whittling wholly unconscious of the presence of the bear.

Even after I had shot it and told him of its actions he did not seem in the least alarmed. We returned to the ranch a few days after this incident, and on the way I discovered a bear and two yearling cubs in a small ravine with a willow thicket at its bottom. I fired from the top of the ravine and must have wounded the bear badly as she barely managed to crawl into the thicket. As soon as I fired I called out, I have fixed him at the same time pointing in the direction of the willows. My New Englander who had as usual, seen nothing started at a run down the ravine and before I realized what his intentions, were had nearly reached the willows I shouted to him to come back, and he turned just as the two cubs ran out at him. A moment later and he would have been torn to pieces He came back laughing perfectly unconscious of the danger he had escaped. I never took him out with me again.[114]

Arrived at Monterrey we found that we could get nothing on Thompson's credit, so we paid for our supplies and hunted up the Coast as far as Fort Ross, returning in Nov [*1846*] with 90 skins.

On this trip while lying at Tomales Bay, Fife, Charly Brown, McCoy and myself started out one day after deer; we took one of the inds. called Blas with us. McCoy and the indian had remained some distance in our rear, on a ridge along which we were passing; all on foot. We had left them but a short time when the indian came running up to us saying that a bear was killing McCoy. We hastened back and found McCoy, lying on the ground, and very badly hurt. He was bitten in the legs and back, and had some of the cords of one of his thighs literally torn out. I dressed his wounds and wrapped them up, applying to them a wild herb, whose name I have forgotten; it resembles very much our tansy. The Indian we had sent to camp for the rest of the men who soon arrived with oars, with which we formed a litter and carried him to camp. The next day we took him to Bodega. Having sent word ahead Capt Smith very kindly came out to meet us. We left McCoy in charge of Capt Smith's motherinlaw, a Peruvian lady, and in less than six weeks he was able to ride a horse to San Francisco. He afterwards told us that he

was walking along with the ind. when they came suddenly upon a she bear with cubs. The bear no soooner saw them than with ears back and mouth open she rushed for McCoy who had barely time to fire when she was on him. The bear knocked him down and made the wounds before mentioned. His shot had not struck her, at least there were no signs of blood, for he broke his gun stock over her head when she came up, which of course only infuriated her. Her cubs began crying and she ran to them or it might have been still worse with McCoy.[115]

In 1842, Horace Bell, one of the participants of the great western migration, arrived in Los Angeles. He became a respected citizen of the community and was commissioned to the rank of major in the California Rangers. He was also accepted to the California Bar and owned and edited The Porcupine, *a very successful newspaper in the Los Angeles area. During those years as editor he wrote down many of his memories and in 1881 published them under the title* Reminiscences of a Ranger. *One chapter of Bell's book deals with his recollections of the early 1850's. He recorded that* "grizzly bears were more plentiful in Southern California than pigs" *and that the* "ferocious brutes were the terror of the aboriginal tribes, and dreaded by the California Spaniards." *Bell described several encounters that the local residents had with grizzlies and one incident that he himself had.* [12–15]

The first of which I remember was that of Jim Boggs of Sonoma county, in 1850. Jim was out one day with a companion and espied a goodly-sized grizzly grazing along the green sward. Jim's partner, being somewhat dexterous in throwing the lazo, caught the old boy around the body. Where-upon the bear took a seat and quietly drew in the man and horse, and most unfortunately the end of the riata was tied to the saddle. The horse struggled to escape, the saddle was turned, the rider fell off and was caught by the bear, and by some means or other the horse freed himself from the saddle and ran away. Boggs finding his companion in the terrible toils of the monster, drew his revolver and bravely approached, placed the muzzle against the side of the bear's head and fired. The bear at once released the man, who took to his heels and left Jim and the bear to fight it out. Jim got in one more shot and then the bear pounced upon him and killed him, as the bear thought. Finding himself in the monster's clutches, Jim pretended to be lifeless, was only considerably bitten and torn to pieces. The bear left him and started away. Jim said, "I turned over a little, raised

Boggs finding his companion in the terrible toils of the monster, drew his revolver and bravely approached, placed the muzzle against the side of the bear's head and fired

my head, and there went the old bear, licking her chops, but just as I raised my head she turned her eye and we looked each other square in the face for an instant, when the bear turned around and sprang upon me just as I've seen a cat spring upon a mouse. It took my whole face in its mouth, and crushing the bones, slung me around and shook me until I was senseless, and for many days it was quite unnecessary for me to make believe dead, because I was on the very doorstep of eternity." Jim was horrible mangled, bones broken generally and the flesh in places literally stripped from his limbs and body.[116]

Colonel William Butts was, in '54 and '55, senior editor of the *Southern Californian*, published under the firm name of Butts & Wheeler . . . the paper was most ably conducted, and edited with a degree of ability rarely exceeded within the limits of the State. Butts was an adopted son of the great Thomas H. Benton, and had served as an officer in the regular army, a daring spirit who always courted danger and sought adventure, was in '53 the hero of a bear fight, the most remarkable of which I ever had knowledge. It happened in San Luis Obispo County. I believe it was at the ranch of Captain Wilson that a party was made up to kill an immense grizzly who would pick up a full-grown cow and walk away with her in his mouth, with as much ease as a mastiff would carry a rabbit. Butts was the only one of the party whom I knew and as he was the hero, is the only one to be mentioned. The grizzly was found on the edge of the plain near a chaparral, and was immediately attacked by the hunters who lodged several balls in his body with which he escaped. The party commenced to beat the bush to get the bear out, and against the remonstrances of all, Butts followed the bear's trail into the thicket. The trail soon entered the dry, gravelly bed of an arroyo and was easily followed. Butts had followed the bear's track for about a half mile when suddenly he lost it. Being confused he stopped to deliberate, and was standing within a few feet of the bear that had lain down in the shade of a clump of chaparral on the side of the arroyo. With a great growl it sprang upon him so suddenly that he had no possible chance of using his Jeager, but as he went down under the ponderous weight of the bear he got his hunting knife out of its scabbard, and then the mortal strife commenced. Butts declared that he never lost his presence of

mind, but endeavored to stab the bear in its vital parts, and that time after time he thrust his eight-inch blade to the hilt in the bear's body as it stood over him biting and tearing him with its claws. Butts said "the last sensation I had was the brute dragging itself over me, and its entrails trailing across my face." A half hour later the two combatants were found--the bear dead, Butts torn into pieces and apparently so. After examination showed that the bones of his face were so crushed that he was disfigured for life; the bones of his left arm and right leg were fractured in several places: some of his ribs were crushed in, and his body and legs were literally cut into strips. It turned out that the bear had been severely wounded by the shots fired into it, but not mortally; that Butts' knife had twice penetrated the lungs and once entered the heart, and that an incision was made in its bowels nearly a foot long. A litter was hastily constructed and poor Butts was carefully carried to the ranch, a surgeon sent for, and then some of the party with some Indians and a Mexican cart and oxen went for the bear which, after an immense amount of difficulty was successfully transported to the ranch, skinned, cut into pieces, and when weighed pulled down 2100 pounds avoirdupois--almost incredible to believe.[117]

In '54 Andy Sublette was mortally injured by a bear in one of the cañons near Santa Monica. I believe it was the Malibu, commonly called Malaga, and preliminarily I must state who Andy Sublette was, and then how he came to be killed. There were three brothers of the Sublette family, Bill, Andy, and the other one's name I forget, Andy being the only one known to me personally. The Sublettes were Rocky Mountain princes, leaders among the mountaineers of the times anterior to Fremont's explorations, the Mexican war and the golden crusade to California . . .

Well, as I before said, Andy Sublette was a Rocky Mountain prince, and in addition thereto was a natural born gentlemen, with manners as refined, gentle and polished as though he had never been beyond the confines of the most cultivated society, and I may say almost the same of all that old first-class Rocky Mountain men,--they were peculiarly sedate and quiet in their manners. Andy had only recovered from severe injuries received in an encounter with a bear at Elizabeth Lake

when in company with Jim Thompson he went on a bear hunt that was to be his last. Somehow or other he became separated from the party and found a grizzly and shot him, but before he could reload the fierce brute was upon him. Poor Andy! it was his last fight, and gallantly did he maintain his former renown. His faithful dog, *Old Buck*, was with him, and the two fought, Andy with his knife and Old Buck with the weapons furnished by nature, and gained the victory over the mountain king. When Thompson found them the bear lay dead, Andy was insensible and Old Buck lascerated in a shocking manner, was licking the blood from poor Andy's face. Tenderly were the two, man and dog, brought to the city, and comfortably lodged and cared for in the Padilla Building, the present U.S. Hotel corner. For many days the struggle between life and death was fierce. Sometimes Andy would get the better of the grim destroyer only to be again driven to the wall. Old Buck was as tenderly cared for as was his gallant master, Jim Thomspon, with his great, good heart, watching night and day by the bedside of the two heroes, while other friends stood ready to assist. Old Buck lay on a nice pallet at the side of Andy's bed. When his master was unconscious the old dog would almost break his heart with piteous, subdued moaning, and when Andy in his delirium would imagine himself still fighting the bear and would say "seize him, Buck," "at him, old fellow"; "we'll get him yet," and like expressions, Old Buck would raise his forepaw on the side of the bed and would give a bewildering growl. Finally Death came out first best, as he always does, and poor Andy was one of the first to be interred in the Fort Hill cemetery. Old Buck rode in the wagon that took Andy to his last resting place, he and Jim Thompson being chief mourners. About every *gringo* in the place turned out at Andy's funeral, and it is safe to aver that there was not one person who left that graveyard with tearless eyes, on account not of the loss of a gallant man, a friend and Christian neighbor, but for the doleful distress of poor Old Buck, who utterly refused to be comforted and to be removed from his dead master's grave. So there he was left to exhaust his grief, which we all thought he would do in a little while. Twice, and sometimes three times a day, Jim Thompson and other kind-hearted friends would take Buck food and drink, and tried in vain to induce him to leave the grave. The faithful old dog refused to be comforted, refused to eat or drink, and on the third day he died, and was buried at the feet of his dead friend and master.[118]

the two fought, Andy with his knife and Old Buck with the weapons furnished by nature, and gained the victory over the mountain king

One time a party of us were encamped in one of the many mountain valleys of our beautiful coast range, and Fred as usual had gone out with his gun. In due course of time he came in, limping along in a doleful plight, his clothes torn in tatters, his face, arms and body scratched and clawed in a fearful manner; in fact he was dreadfully used up, but as he said in response to our anxious inquiries, "Boys, I'm pretty badly whipped, but not quite done for." He then told us he had killed a young grizzly, and that the old bear mamma had got hold of him. He said he was walking along down on one side of a steep descending ridge or backbone, and suddenly came upon two young grizzlies, and shot one of them dead. Hastily reloading his rifle he took after the other, which ran along the mountain side in a horizontal line, which soon brought it and also its pursuer to the backbone or summit of the ridge. The cub had from the first set up a terrific squalling, and it so happened that the old she bear had been on the opposite side of the ridge when her first cub was killed, and followed in the direction taken by the frightened young survivor. The result was that the old she bear, Fred Stacer and the cub all met on a converged line. When the old bear saw Fred she ran back a few paces, stopped, looked at him for a moment, and then commenced to walk deliberately toward him. Fred knew he could hit her directly in the eye, so he quietly awaited her approach until she got within ten feet of him, when he pulled away, and lo! for the first time his gun missed fire. He had forgotten to put a cap on the tube. As quick as a flash the old bear sprang upon him, and the two commenced to roll down the steep mountain side, Fred struggling to escape, and the bear plying teeth and toe-nail as best she could. The further they went the more rapid became their motion, and finally the two plunged over a perpendicular, rocky precipice, more than fifty feet high, and lodged in the top of a live oak tree that grew at the bottom. Fortunately when they struck the tough but yielding branches of the tree Fred was on top, and lodged, and held on for dear life, while the bear went crashing through to the bottom, and thus was the luckless and lucky Nimrod delivered from the clutches of the mountain monster. Leaving poor Fred in camp, we proceeded to the place of encounter and found the dead cub, the rifle, and then descended the rugged mountain side to the

the two plunged over a perpendicular, rocky precipice, more than fifty feet high

precipice and the place where the old bear had fallen, but she was gone.[119]

In the introduction to his book Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border, *Colonel Randolph Marcy gave his reasons for writing the text.*

> If any excuse were needed for the publication of sketches somewhat desultory and disconnected as these will prove, I am persuaded that excuse may be found in the simple fact that all these subjects of my description--men, conditions of life, races of aboriginal inhabitants, and adventurous hunters and pioneers--are passing away.

One of his topics in the book was hunting. Marcy states that the accounts of hunting and the descriptions of western game as well as the methods of pursuing and killing it—all these parts of the volume—are offered to the public in the hope that they may have practical value and be of public as well as private benefit. He included tales on hunting elk, deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, buffalo, beaver, prairie dogs, and bear, as well as tracking and lassoing bear. With regard to the latter, Marcy relates two stories given to him by J. Ross Browne, who came to San Francisco in 1849. As he was traveling through the Santa Margarita Valley on his way to Los Angeles in the fall of 1849, Browne saw a huge grizzly running straight toward him with four men in pursuit of the bear. Browne quickly hid himself and was a witness to the following incident, which he related to the Harper's New Monthly Magazine. *Marcy chose to use Browne's own words in describing the incident and quotes directly from* Harper's Magazine. *Marcy's story of the naval officer, given to him by Browne, makes one wonder how much credibility Marcy placed in Browne's stories. As mentioned above,* Harper's *published several of Browne's personal adventures. One story that Browne tells on himself regarding hunting a grizzly took place in 1857 near Bear Harbor. He felt the time had come to kill a grizzly. Browne says:*

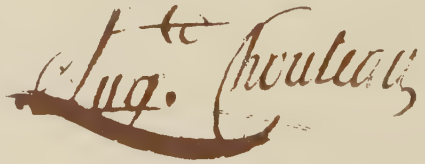
> I knew several gentlemen in California who had been horribly mutilated by these ferocious animals. One had the side of his face torn off; another had one of his arms 'chawed up,' as he expressed it; a third had suffered paralysis from a bite in the spine; a fourth had received eighteen wounds in a fight with one bear; and I knew of various cases in which men had been otherwise crippled for life or killed on the spot. Hence the peculiar charm of a fight with a grizzly! If you kill your bear, it

> is a triumph worth enjoying; if you get killed yourself, some of the newspapers will give you a friendly notice; if you get crippled for life, you carry about you a patent of courage which may be useful in case you go into politics; and although honor may not be capable of binding a wounded leg, or mending a crippled arm--as Falstaff hath it--yet it will go a great way in a legislative campaign. Besides, it has its effect upon the ladies. A 'chawed up' man is very much admired all over the world.

Another incident given to Harper's Magazine *by Browne describes a hunting trip in the Coast Range east of Bear Harbor, where after several hours of hunting Browne realized he was lost.* [16–18]

Scarcely had I partially concealed myself when I heard a loud shouting from the men on horseback, and, peeping over the bank, saw within fifty or sixty paces a huge grizzly bear, but no longer retreating. He had faced round toward his pursuers, and now seemed determined to fight. The horsemen were evidently native Californians, and managed their animals with wonderful skill and grace. The nearest swept down like an avalanche toward the bear, while the others coursed off a short distance in a circling direction to prevent his escape. Suddenly swerving a little to one side, the leader whirled his lasso once or twice around his head, and let fly at his game with unerring aim. The loop caught one of the fore paws, and the bear was instantly jerked down upon his haunches, struggling and roaring with all his might. It was a striking instance of the power of the rider over the horse, that, wild with terror as the latter was, he dared not disobey the slightest pressure of the rein, but went through all the evolutions, blowing trumpet-blasts from his nostrils, and with eyes starting from their sockets. Despite the strain kept upon the lasso, the bear soon regained his feet, and commenced hauling in the spare line with his fore paws so as to get within reach of the horse. He had advanced within ten feet before the nearest of the other horsemen could bring his lasso to bear upon him. The first throw was at his hind legs--the main object being to stretch him out--but it missed. Another more fortunate cast took him round the neck. Both riders pulled in opposite directions, and the bear soon rolled on the ground again, biting furiously at the lassos, and uttering the most terrific roars. The strain upon his neck soon choked off his breath, and he was forced to let loose his grasp upon the other lasso. While struggling to free his neck, the two other horsemen dashed up, swinging their lassos and shouting with all their might so as to attract his attention. The nearest, watching narrowly every

motion of the frantic animal, soon let fly his lasso, and made a lucky hitch around one of his hind legs. The other, following quickly with a large loop, swung it entirely over the bear's body, and all four riders now set up a yell of triumph, and began pulling in opposite directions. The writhing, pitching, and straining of the powerful monster were now absolutely fearful. A dust arose over him, and the earth flew up in every direction. Sometimes by a desperate effort he regained his feet, and actually dragged one or more of the horses toward him by main strength; but whenever he attempted this, the others stretched their lassos, and either choked him or jerked him down upon his haunches. It was apparent that his wind was giving out, partly by reason of the long chase, and partly owing to the noose around his throat. A general pull threw him once more upon his back. Before he could regain his feet, the horsemen, by a series of dexterous manoeuvres, wound him completely up, so that he lay perfectly quiet upon the ground, breathing heavily, and utterly unable to extricate his paws from the labyrinth of lassos in which he was entangled. One of the riders now gave the reins of his horse to another and dismounted. Cautiously approaching, with a spare *riata* he cast a noose over the bear's fore paws, and wound the remaining part tightly round the neck, so that what strength might still have been left was speedily exhausted by suffocation. This done, another rider dismounted, and the two succeeded in binding their victim so firmly by the paws that it was impossible for him to break loose. They next bound his jaws together by means of another *riata*, winding it all the way up around his head, upon which they loosened the fastening around his neck so as to give him air. When all was secure, they freed the lassos and again mounted their horses.[120]



I have heard it stated that a naval officer many years ago made the experiment of hunting the animal with the lasso, but his success was by no means as decisive as in the instance related by Mr. Browne. This officer had, it appeared, by constant practice upon the ship while making the long and tiresome voyage round the Horn, acquired very considerable proficiency in the use of the lasso, and was able, at twenty or thirty paces, to throw the noose over the head of the negro cook at almost every cast. So confident had he become in his skill, that on his arrival upon the

all four riders now set up a yell of triumph, and began pulling in opposite directions

coast of Southern California he employed a guide, and mounted upon a well-trained horse, with his lasso properly coiled and ready for use, he one morning set out for the mountains with the firm resolve of bagging a few grizzlies before night. He had not been out a great while before he encountered one of the largest specimens of the mighty beast, whose terrific aspect amazed him not a little; but, as he had come out with a firm determination to capture a grizzly, in direct opposition to the advice of his guide he resolved to show him that he was equal to the occasion. Accordingly he seized his lasso, and, riding up near the animal, gave it several rapid whirls above his head in most artistic manner, and sent the noose directly around the bear's neck at the very first cast; but the animal, instead of taking to his heels and endeavoring to run away as he had anticipated, very deliberately sat up on his haunches, facing his adversary, and commenced making a very careful examination of the rope. He turned his head from one side to the other in looking at it; he felt it with his paws, and scrutinized it very closely, as if it was something he could not comprehend. In the mean time the officer had turned his horse in the opposite direction, and commenced applying the rowels to his sides most vigorously, with the confident expectation that he was to choke the bear to death and drag him off in triumph; but, to his astonishment, the horse, with his utmost efforts, did not seem to advance. The great strain upon the lasso, however, began to choke the bear so much that he soon became enraged, and gave the rope several violent slaps, first with one paw and then with the other; but, finding that this did not relieve him, he seized the lasso with both paws, and commenced pulling it in hand over hand, or rather paw over paw, and bringing with it the horse and rider that were attached to the opposite extremity. The officer redoubled the application of both whip and spurs, but it was all of no avail; he had evidently "caught a Tartar," and, in spite of all the efforts of his horse, he recoiled rather than advanced. At this intensely exciting and critical juncture he cast a hasty glance to the rear, and, to his horror, found himself steadily backing toward the frightful monster, who sat up with his eyes glaring like balls of fire, his huge mouth wide open and frothing with rage, and sending forth the most terrific and deep-toned roars. He now, for the first time, felt seriously alarmed, and cried out vociferously for his guide to come to his rescue. The latter responded promptly, rode up, cut the lasso, and extricated the amateur gentlemen from his perilous position. He was much rejoiced at his escape, and, in reply to the inquiry of the guide as to whether he desired to continue the hunt, he said it was

first with one paw and then with the other; but, finding that this did not relieve him, he seized the lasso with both paws, and commenced pulling it in hand over hand, or rather paw over paw, and bringing with it the horse and rider

getting so late that he believed he would capture no more grizzlies that day.

I do not, of course, pretend to vouch for the authenticity of the foregoing narrative; I have merely given it in the way it was related to me, as a good story, the truth of which the reader can judge of as well as myself. I have no doubt, however, that an animal of such extraordinary proportions, possessing such enormous development of bone and muscle, and whose strength is asserted as sufficient to enable him to drag off a full-grown buffalo, could compete successfully with a California horse in a contest of physical powers. I therefore see nothing improbable in the account given above.[121]

Once or twice I mounted the mule and gave him the bridle; he invariably started off in a direction which seemed the exact opposite of the right one, though I have since suspected that the poor animal was right. On the whole, I thought it best to tie him to a tree, and make a little tour of discovery on foot, though this plan involved a serious consideration. It was possible to lose both the tree and the mule . . .

Following the highest apparent direction of the ridge, it was not long before a larger opening in the timber was perceptible; and this there was reason to hope would command a view of the ocean. In the excitement of the discovery I pushed on as fast as possible over the rough and jagged rocks; and upon crossing a small canon was gratified by the familiar sound of the surf in the distance. There could now no longer be a doubt as to the proper direction. I hurried back with all speed toward the point of departure, as I supposed, but soon found that every rise in the ground and every tree had about the same general appearance. Here was another dilemma. In looking for the mule there was danger of losing the direction of the surf, and to lose both would be a sad climax to the adventure. Certainly it could not be more than half a mile to the place I had started from, and as the timber was tolerably open there was no great difficulty in seeing that far. While I was deliberating upon this unforeseen state of affairs, a crackling sound in the bushes, about fifty yards off, attracted my attention. It was too heavy for the tread of a deer. I had often heard of peculiar "snort," or blowing sound, uttered by a grizzly when suddenly alarmed, and as the crackling of the bushes was followed by this

infallible sign, there could be no doubt on the subject. I had struck upon a grizzly after all, and now was the time to achieve a reputation! To tell the honest truth, the idea of attacking such a ferocious monster single-handed, in a lonesome and desolate place like this, so far away from all human aid, was rather startling. Suppose my rifle should miss fire, and the bear should take a notion to give chase? There was no possibility of escape. Nothing short of a squirrel or a wild-cat could climb any of the trees within the range of vision; and as for running, one might as well undertake to run over an acre of upturned harrows. The question was, to shoot or not to shoot? On the one hand, there was death or mutilation; on the other, had I not come out expressly to kill a grizzly, and here was one beyond peradventure? Already I saw his back moving above the fern. He must be a monster, for the fern was at least four feet high. Probably he was standing on his hind legs. It was impossible to discern any particular portion of his body distinctly owing to the intervening brush, but I could see sufficient to indicate his exact position. I have never been able to analyze the axact feeling which governed me at this crisis, as I suddenly raised my rifle and with a quick and uncertain aim fired. It must have been inspiration. No sooner had the sharp crack of the rifle startled the solitudes of the forest than there was a most terrific crashing of bushes, and the mingled sounds of blowing and struggling, as if the animal was in his dying agonies. The fern waved to and fro, and even a tree of considerable size close by shook as if the bear was endeavoring to tear it up by the roots. All this I saw at a glance. The next moment astonishment at what I had done seized me. Was it possible I had killed a grizzly? At all events he was mortally wounded. The way he tore up the ground and made the dust fly was evidence of that. Still he was not yet dead. He might take a notion to give chase. Many a bear had killed or maimed his adversary after receiving a mortal wound. It must not be supposed that these various thoughts occupied much time. They flashed through my mind as suddenly as the crack of the rifle. Next moment I retired; that is to say, I ran about two hundred yards, rough as the ground was, at a rate of speed that I venture to say the renowned Guildersleeve in his palmiest days never attained. I then stopped to take breath and have a look at the enemy. The ground was somewhat elevated, and I could distinctly see the spot where the bear had manifested such violent symptoms of dissolution. It was perfectly still. The fern no longer waved; the bushes no longer crashed; the dust no longer rose from the scene of the struggle. But there was something there, standing stock still, staring at me--a large animal--not the bear evidently, for there never was

a grizzly or any other species of bear known in natural history with such a pair of ears as this extraordinary animal had. I looked again and again; finally took out my spectacles, wiped them deliberately, put them on, and looked again. If I was astonished at the idea of having killed an enormous grizzly, I was infinitely more astonished to discover that the animal in question was not a grizzly, nor was it dead. On the contrary, it was MY OWN MULE! apparently transfixed with horror at the attempt I had made upon his life. The discovery was mortifying enough--not so much because I had shot at the mule, as because I had missed killing him. Who would believe the story in camp? Of what use was it to have tested one's nerve in this way, and then be subjected to a broadside or ridicule? Had I killed the mule the most incredulous in the camp would have given credit for the supposed achievement.

It was some time before the frightened animal would permit me to approach him with a rifle. He was evidently unable to account for the attack made upon him, and labored under some apprehension that it might be renewed at any moment. The mark of the ball was in the tree; and the struggle on the ground which had deceived me had arisen from the fact that the riata had gotten foul of his legs, and thrown him when he attempted to run after being shot at. Had he succeeded, the very singular spectacle would have been presented to any person who might have been present, of a mule and his rider running away from each other under the mutual impression that each was seeking the life of the other.[122]

Isaac Slover arrived and settled near Colton, San Bernardino County, in 1842. He had spent several years trapping in the Southwest, principally along the upper Arkansas River in the vicinity of Pueblo, Colorado. He had been part of numerous trapping expeditions out of Taos and Santa Fe during the 1820's and 1830's. John Brown, Sr., a companion to Slover during those days, stated that "his great ambition was to kill grizzlies--he called them cubibs. He would leave our camp and be gone for weeks at a time without anyone knowing his whereabouts." *Brown described Slover as a* "quiet, peaceable man, very reserved. He would heed no warning and accept no advice as to his methods of hunting." *In 1852, Brown settled in San Bernardino and discovered that Slover was living in the valley, still enjoying his old pastime of hunting grizzlies. In October 1854, at the age of eighty, Slover had a tragic confrontation with a grizzly near Cajon Pass. Brown relates the following story regarding Slover.* [19]

"He never forgot his chief enjoyment in pursuing the grizzly; when no one else would go hunting with him he would go alone into the mountains, although his friends warned him of the danger.

"One day he went with his companion, Bill McMines, up the left fork of the Cajon Pass almost to the summit where he came across a large grizzly and Slover fired at close range. The bear fell but soon rose and crawled away and laid down in some oak brush. Slover after re-loading his rifle began approaching the monster in spite of the objection of McMines. As the old experienced bear hunter reached the brush the bear gave a sudden spring and fell on Mr. Slover, tearing him almost to pieces. That ended his bear hunting. Frequently the most expert hunters take too many chances, as was the case this time. McMines came down the mountain and told the tale, and a party went back and cautiously approached the spot; found the bear dead, but Slover still breathing but insensible. He was brought down to Sycamore Grove on a rude litter and there died. The scalp was torn from his head, his legs and one arm broken, the whole body bruised and torn. He was taken to his home and buried between his adobe house and the mountain; the spot was not marked, or if so has rotted away so that I have been unable to locate the grave after searching for it, so to place a stone to mark the resting place of my old Rocky Mountain associate, Cristoba! Slover, as I have brought from Cajon Pass a granite rock and placed it at the grave of my other companion, V.J. Herring, more familiarly known as "Uncle Rube."[123]

APPENDIX

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
William H. Ashley	Approximately 1782 Chesterfield County, Virginia	March 26, 1838 St. Louis, Missouri pneumonia	1822 Ashley–Henry Company
John J. Astor	July 17, 1763 Waldorf, Duchy of, Baden, Germany	March 29, 1848 New York natural causes	1808 Formed American Fur Company
James Baker	December 19, 1818 Belleville, Illinois	May 15, 1898 Dixon, Wyoming natural causes	1838 American Fur Company
James P. Beckwourth	April 26, 1798 Fredericksburg, Virginia	1866 among Crow Indians intestinal disorder	1824 Ashley–Henry Company
Karl Bodmer	1805 Zurich, Switzerland	1893	1833 Alexander Maximilian expedition
Jim Boggs	Resident of Sonoma County, California, 1850		
Benjamin L.E. Bonneville	April 14, 1796 Near Paris, France	June 12, 1878 near Fort Smith, Arkansas natural causes	1832 Bonneville Company
James Bridger	March 17, 1804 Richmond, Virginia	July 17, 1881 Missouri natural causes	1822 Ashley–Henry Company
Charley Brown	Long-time trapping companion and friend of George Nidever		
J. Ross Browne	February 11, 1821 Dublin, Ireland	December 9, 1875 Oakland, California appendicitis	1849 Political appointment in California
John J. Burroughs	Kentucky(?)	Kentucky(?)	1835 American Fur Company
William Butts	Senior editor of Southern California, 1854–55		
Robert Campbell	February 12, 1804 Tyrone, Ireland	October 16, 1879 St. Louis, Missouri bronchial ailment	1825 Ashley–Smith Company
William Cannon or William Canning	Accompanied the overland Astorians, Pacific Fur Company, 1811		

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
Kit Carson	December 24, 1809 Richmond, Kentucky	May 23, 1868 Fort Lyon, Colorado natural causes	1826 Trade caravan en route to Santa Fe
Michel S. Cerre	May 6, 1802 St. Louis, Missouri	January 5, 1860 St. Louis, Missouri pneumonia	1825 Traveled to Santa Fe to procure trading license
Auguste P. Chouteau	1786	1838	Original member of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, 1809 With Charles Larpenteur at Fort Van Buren, 1842
William Clark	August 1, 1770 Caroline County, Virginia	September 1, 1838 St. Louis, Missouri natural causes	1804 Co-commander, Lewis and Clark expedition
Antoine Claymore	Hunting companion of Joe Meek, 1832		
James Clyman	February 1, 1792 Fauquier County, Virginia	December 27, 1881 Napa Valley, California natural causes	1823 Ashley–Henry Company
_____ Coe	Trapper with James Beckwourth		
John Colter	Approximately 1775 Virginia	May 7, 1812 Missouri	1804 Lewis and Clark expedition
William Craig	1807 Greenbriar County, Virginia	1869 near Lapwai Reservation, Idaho	1829 Smith, Jackson, and Sublette Company
Ramsay Crooks	January 2, 1787 Middle Greenock, Scotland	June 6, 1859 New York, New York natural causes	Approximately 1807 In partnership with Robert McClellan
Lewis Dawson	Killed by grizzly at Purgatory Creek, Colorado, November, 1821		
John Day	Culpepper County, Virginia	February 16, 1820 Snake River Country	1811 Pacific Fur Company
_____ Dechamp	Hunter with Maximilian, 1832		
Pierre Depot	Hunter with Peter Skene Ogden, 1825		
Pierre Jean de Smet	December 31, 1801 Termonde, Belgium	May, 1872 St. Louis, Missouri	1840 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
John Dougherty	April 12, 1791 Bardstown, Kentucky	December 28, 1860 Liberty, Missouri natural causes	1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
William Doughty	March, 1812 Tennessee	May 30, 1872 Wapato Lake, Oregon natural causes	1832 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
David Dreidroppel	Hunter and personal servant of Maximilian		
George Drouillard	Canada	May, 1810 Three Forks, Montana killed by Blackfeet	1804 Lewis and Clark expedition
Job F. Dye	January 17, 1807 Allen County, Kentucky	March 4, 1883 Corralitas, California natural causes	1830 Bean–Sinclair party
Warren A. Ferris	December 26, 1810 Glens Fall, New York	February 8, 1872 Reinhardt, Texas natural causes	1830 American Fur Company
Thomas Fitzpatrick	1799 County Cavan, Ireland	February 7, 1854 Washington, D.C. pneumonia	1823 Ashley–Henry Company
Jacob Fowler	March 1, 1764 Winchester, Maryland	October 15, 1849 Covington, Kentucky natural causes	1821 Co-commander, Glenn–Fowler expedition
Joseph Gale	April 29, 1807 Washington, D.C.	December 13, 1881 Eagle Valley, Oregon natural causes	with Ewing Young in 1831
_____ Gardiner	Trapper with Joe Meek, 1836		
Hugh Glass		1832 or 1833 mouth of Bighorn River killed by Arikara Indians	1823 Ashley–Henry Company
Hugh Glenn	January 7, 1778 near Gerrardstown, West Virginia	May 28, 1833 Cincinnati, Ohio natural causes	1821 Co-commander, Glenn–Fowler expedition
John Gray (Grey) or Ignace Hatchiorauguasha	Iroquois community on south bank of St. Lawrence River	Between 1841 and 1844 Kansas City, Missouri killed in fight with neighbor, Mrs. Perrault	Approximately 1816 Northwest Fur Company

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
John Hawkins or Jacob Hawken	Employed by Smith, Jackson, and Sublette Company, 1828 or 1829		
Mark Head	Virginia	1847 near Taos, New Mexico killed by Mexicans protesting American occupation	1832 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Andrew Henry	Approximately 1773–78 Fayette County, Pennsylvania	January 19, 1832 Harmony township, Missouri natural causes	1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
Wilson P. Hunt	March 20, 1783 Asbury, New Jersey	April 13, 1842 St. Louis, Missouri natural causes	1811 Pacific Fur Company
David E. Jackson	October 30, 1788 Buckhannon, Virginia [West Virginia]	December 24, 1837 Paris, Tennessee typhoid	1822 Ashley–Henry Company
Edwin James	August 27, 1797 Weybridge, Vermont	October 28, 1861 Burlington, Iowa natural causes	1820 Stephen Long expedition
Thomas James	November 1, 1782 Maryland	December 17, 1847 Illinois natural causes	1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
_____ Keyere	Trapper with James Beckwourth		
Mathew Kincaid or Mathew Kinkead	1795 Madison County, Kentucky		1825 Trade caravan en route to Santa Fe
William Kittson	Trapper with Peter Skene Ogden, 1825		1817 Northwest Fur Company
Charles Larpenteur	1807 near Fontainebleau, France	November 15, 1872 Little Sioux, Iowa natural causes	1833 Sublette and Campbell Company
Zenas Leonard	March 19, 1809 Clearfield, Pennsylvania	1858 Sibley, Missouri	1831 Gantt and Blackwell Company
Meriwether Lewis	August 18, 1774 Albemarle County, Virginia	October 22,1809 Natchez Trace, Tennessee mysterious circumstances either murder or suicide	1804 Co-commander, Lewis and Clark expedition

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
Manuel Lisa	September 8, 1772 New Orleans, Louisiana	August 12, 1820 St. Louis, Missouri	1807 Lisa–Chouteau party
John Long	England		1777 Independent fur merchant north of Lake Superior
Stephen H. Long	December 30, 1784 Hopkinton, New Hampshire	September 4, 1864 Alton, Illinois natural causes	1820 Commander, Long expedition
Redding McCoy	Trapper with George Nidever, 1846		
Randolph B. Marcy	April 9, 1812 Greenwich, Massachusetts	November 22, 1887 West Orange, New Jersey natural causes	1846–58 Involved in military expeditions on the American frontier
_____ Marie	With St. Louis Missouri Fur Company Expedition at Three Forks of the Missouri River, Spring 1810		1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
Alexander Maximilian	September, 1782 Neuwied, Prussia	1867 Neuwied, Prussia	1833 Commander, Alexander Maximilian expedition
Joseph Meek	February 7, 1810 Virginia	June 20, 1875 Hillsboro Tract, Oregon natural causes	1829 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Pierre Menard	1766 St. Antoine, Quebec	June 13, 1844 Kaskaskia, Illinois natural causes	1809 Partnership with Manuel Lisa
Alfred J. Miller	January 2, 1810 Baltimore, Maryland	June 26, 1874 Baltimore, Maryland	1837 Sir William Drummond Stewart's party Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Levin Mitchell	May have come in 1829 with William Sublette was definitely in mountains, 1830		
_____ Nelson	Trapper with Joe Meek, 1829		
George Nidever	December 20, 1802 East Tennessee	March 24, 1883 Santa Barbara, California natural causes	1830 Bean–Sinclair party

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
Peter Skene Ogden	1794 Quebec City, Canada	September 27, 1854 Oregon City, Oregon natural causes	1810 Northwest Fur Company
Dick Owens	Was in the mountains with Joseph Gale, 1835		
James Ohio Pattie	Approximately 1804 Kentucky	Approximately 1849–50 supposedly died in a snowstorm in the Sierra Nevadas	1824 Sylvestre Pratte party
Archibald Pelton	With St. Louis Missouri Fur Company expedition at Three Forks of the Missouri River, Spring 1810 With Andrew Henry on Henry's Fork of the Snake River, Winter 1810–11 Arrived at Fort Astoria, January, 1812		1807 Manuel Lisa expedition or 1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
Joshua Pilcher	May 15, 1790 Culpepper County, Virginia	June 5, 1843 St. Louis, Missouri lung disease	1819 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company
Daniel T. Potts	Approximately 1796–97 Pennsylvania	Drowned in shipwreck in Gulf of Mexico	1822 Ashley–Henry Company
Harrison Rogers		July 1828 Umpqua River in Oregon killed by Umpqua Indians	1826 Jedediah Smith's southwest expedition
Isaac P. Rose	February 18, 1815 Mercer County, Pennsylvania		1834 Nathaniel Wyeth's supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Osborne Russell	June 12, 1814 Bowdoinham, Maine	August 26, 1892 Placerville, California "miner's rheumatism"	1834 Nathaniel Wyeth's supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
_____ St. Jean [John]	With St. Louis Missouri Fur Company Expedition at Three Forks of the Missouri River, Spring 1810		1807 Manuel Lisa expedition or 1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
Isaac C. Slover	1780 Pennsylvania	October 14, 1854 Cajon Pass, San Bernardino, California grizzly mauling	1821 Glenn–Fowler expedition
Jedediah S. Smith	January 6, 1799 Bainbridge, New York	1831 Between Cimarron and Arkansas River ambushed by Comanches	1822 Ashley–Henry Company
Fred Stacer	Resident of California, 1850's		
_____ Stanberry	Trapper with Joe Meek, 1836		
William Drummond Stewart	December 26, 1795 Murthly Castle, Perthshire, Scotland	April 28, 1871 Dalpowie, Scotland pneumonia	1833 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Robert Stuart	February 18, 1785 Callander, Perthshire Scotland	October 29, 1848 Chicago, Illinois	1807 Northwest Fur Company
Andrew W. Sublette	1808 Somerset, Kentucky	December 18 or 19, 1854 Malibu Canyon, Santa Monica, California grizzly mauling	1830 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Milton G. Sublette	1801 Somerset, Kentucky	April 5, 1837 Fort William, Wyoming	1823 Ashley–Henry Company
William L. Sublette	September 21, 1799 Stanford, Kentucky	July 23, 1845 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania tuberculosis	1823 Ashley–Henry Company
John Townsend	August 10, 1809 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	February 16, 1851 Washington, D.C.	1834 Nathaniel Wyeth's supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Joseph R. Walker	December 13, 1798 Roan County, Tennessee or Goachland County, Virginia	November 13, 1876 Contra Costa, California natural causes	1821 Trapping party en route to the Rockies and New Mexico
William Weir [Ware]	With St. Louis Missouri Fur Company expedition at Three Forks of the Missouri River, Spring 1810		1807 Manuel Lisa expedition or 1809 St. Louis Missouri Fur Company

NAME	BIRTH Date–Place	DEATH Date–Place–Cause	ENTERED FUR TRADE Date–Accompanied
Caleb Wilkins	July 10, 1810 Zanesville, Ohio	October 5, 1890 Orenco, Oregon natural causes	1835 Employed by Nathaniel Wyeth at Fort Hall
Frederick A. Wislizenus	1810 Germany	September 22, 1889 St. Louis, Missouri natural causes	1839 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
William Wolfskill	March 20, 1798 Madison County, Kentucky	October 3, 1866 Los Angeles, California natural causes	1822 William Becknell's trade caravan en route to Santa Fe
Richens Lacy Wootton or "Uncle Dick"	May 6, 1816 Mecklenburg County, Virginia	August 22, 1893 Trinidad, New Mexico natural causes	1836 Bent and St. Vrain caravan en route to Bent's Fort
John Wyeth	Member of Nathaniel Wyeth's party accompanied the supply caravan en route to the rendezvous, 1832		
Nathaniel Wyeth	January 29, 1802 Cambridge, Massachusetts	August 31, 1856 Boston, Massachusetts	1832 Accompanied supply caravan en route to the rendezvous
Ewing Young	Approximately 1792–94 Jonesboro, Tennessee	February 1841 Oregon intestinal disorder	1822 William Becknell's trade caravan en route to Santa Fe
George C. Yount	May 4, 1794 Dowden Creek, Burke County, North Carolina	October 5, 1865 Napa Valley, California natural causes	1826 Trade caravan en route to Santa Fe

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